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LIPPINCOTT'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE

NOVEMBER, 1909



THE MAGNATE OF PARADISE

BY

MARY IMLAY TAYLOR

Author of "The Impersonator," "My Lady Clancarty," etc.

I.

"LOOK here, Holland, I don't know that I have a right to say a word, but—" Innes hesitated, stopped, and then went on with a plunge: "Of course old man Callander is one of the Captains of Industry, one of the Money Kings; they even say that he's got to be reckoned with in the next election. I suppose all's fair in love, war, and *haute finance*, but—well, a word to the wise!"

Holland was leaning forward, looking out from under the hood of the little electric runabout. The rain had turned into a white mist, thick and soft as smoke; it curled upward from the streaming pavements and floated before them, a curtain of vapor, covering his face with little points of moisture too fine for rain. "I know what you mean, Innes," he said simply, after a moment, "but let me tell you, Callander has just done a pretty decent thing for me, or offered to, and I can't listen to anything against him. I believe I've misjudged him myself."

Lawrence Innes glanced at the fine lines of the face beside him, a face full of reserve and strength, and speculated upon many things. "Of course old friendships count, I know."

Holland nodded. "Yes, you remember Little Paradise. You're coming to this reception to-day, aren't you?"

"I?" Innes laughed. "I go nowhere in society now, my dear fellow; it bores me to death. If I went I should certainly go to see Miss Callander. You have seen her lately?"

Holland shook his head, a dull red staining his thin cheeks. "Not for two years."

"People here rave about her; I suppose you've seen her portrait in the Gallery, and heard of her when she was presented at court last spring? Lord! I think every woman here knew how many yards of lace she had on her gown."

Hugh Holland made no reply. The runabout had whirled around a corner and was swinging down the wide avenue toward a group of carriages that blocked the street before an imposing house. Innes drove his little automobile into line.

"Morton's nearly twenty years older than she is; rich, but a regular bounder, and a grafter, too, so they tell me. The idea of a girl like Betty Callander marrying him! It's all rotten! But that old uncle and aunt of hers are equal to anything."

Holland jumped out. "You won't come in, Larry?"

Innes glanced at the open door and the row of staring footmen. "My dear boy, it's a kind of circus, you know," he said, "and I never was a good clown."

"Thanks for the lift, then," Holland replied, holding out his hand.

The two men looked into each other's eyes for an instant, then the runabout moved on, and Holland turned and went up. As he began to ascend the broad flight of crimson-carpeted stairs which led to the reception rooms above, he caught a glimpse of brilliant coloring, as the gayly-gowned women crossed the space above the landing, and here and there he recognized a man as a celebrity. He came up slowly, feeling oddly enough in the gay throng, and suddenly remembering the far off Western town, his dim little office, and the struggle that it was his duty to face.

Then he forgot it all, for a young woman came swiftly to the head of the stairs to greet the new arrivals. She was slender, but the poise and the buoyancy of her figure gave her an immediate distinction, and the expression of her face, the beautiful and delicate coloring, as she turned it toward him in the soft light, had a charm as subtle, as elusive, as poignant, as the charm of some of the rarer exotics. He was conscious again of the warm glow of her eyes, the whiteness of her brow, the bright tints of her hair, which was soft and luxurious, and framed the lovely oval of her face like a nimbus. Her filmy gown of white and pale green, the ruffles of lace, the long, soft folds, the shimmer and mistiness of it, seemed to reveal every dryad-like line of her slender figure, to accentuate her graceful proportions. He was sharply conscious, too, of the change in her; the girl was gone, here was the woman, the woman of subtle impulses and incomprehensible reserves. This was, and was not, the Betty Callander he had known.

She turned suddenly, holding out her hand with a charming smile.

"It's an ill wind that blows nobody good!" she said lightly. "Did the storm bring you, Mr. Holland? And how do you do?" she added, with a little laugh. "And why were you so long coming up those old stairs?"

"So you knew all the time?"—he smiled too. "When I saw you at the head of the stairs I thought it was Jacob's ladder and waited—for the angel to descend."

"Courtier!" she mocked him. "They say, instead, that there's a ghost who ascends and descends these stairs with a horse-pistol under his arm and a bag-wig! The house is old in the centre, you know, with brand new wings. There's a gruesome story about the old boy with the wig being put out of the world with the Black Button. Of course you know what that means?"

Holland shook his head, still laughing. "Indeed I do not, unless you've invented it to smother my reference to angels."

"Invented it! Why, it refers to the secret poisoner of slave days, the negro who carried the Black Button, the poison under his little finger-nail, to put in your coffee. Don't you feel sorry now for the old gentleman with the bag-wig? As for your angels, they're all ascending to-day. Not that I mean you're one—heaven forbid! Come, tell me all about Little Paradise."

"But why am I forbidden to be an angel?" he asked amusedly. "Have I no celestial chances?"

She shook her head, her glance inscrutable. "No, you must fight the legions here; we need you. Oh, I've heard all about your campaigns!"

"And my failures," he said dryly. "One can always be celebrated in the wrong way, it seems."

"Sometimes failure spells success," she said simply. "At least, I think I should be proud of your failures myself. How are all the good people, though? I suppose Anna Karmon is married? I heard so. She never sent me word. I wonder why."

"Thought you had outgrown us, I fancy," he said; "that you'd forgotten old friends."

"I'm not like that!" she flashed indignantly. "And old Judge Rodney—is he well?"

"Rugged, and sent you his love."

"The dear old boy!" She smiled radiantly. "And the others?"

"All well, I think," he replied.

"And dear old Miss Harriet too?"

His face sobered. "Well? Yes, but in trouble about her lands. A man out there has cheated her. She's bringing suit."

"Miss Harriet! Oh, no, she could n't; I don't believe it; it's you!"

"Oh, I got her up to the point all right. The difficulty is to keep her there," he laughed.

"There! I said it was you. Do you remember her meadows and the little brook?" She looked away dreamily: the gay scene around her dissolved; she saw, instead, a woodland path, deep flecked in shadows, the long, interlacing branches arched above it, and beyond, the glimmer of the still pool, limpid, deep, full of mirrored foliage, where the speckled trout lay hidden. She heard the call of the wood-thrush.

"It is just the same," he said, answering her thought. "The trees part to the right, and one sees the sun set above the Gap. When I came away they were plowing."

"Yes," she said; "and next month they sow. In April the arbutus will bloom."

"And the blood-root under Primrose Cliff."

She looked up with shining eyes. "It's all the same. Ah, I wish——" She broke off suddenly. "Let me present you to some one. I forgot that you were a stranger here."

"But I'd rather stay," he objected, defiantly conscious of the line on the stair behind him.

"You must go and speak to aunt," she retorted. "She's there in the drawing-room. Uncle won't do his duty—you know he hates fuss and feathers. And look at the people behind you! Fie! I'm a hostess!" and she went forward to do her neglected duty with an outstretched hand.

Holland was so busy watching her that he forgot her aunt, forgot the people about him, until some one spoke his name, and he turned to face Mrs. Lawrence Innes.

"I know she's very charming," Kitty Innes said, laughing, "but you should consider the lilies of the field. Where did you drop from, Hugh?"

"From Larry's automobile," he replied. "I tried to get him to come in, but he's eschewed functions, I believe."

Kitty colored. "Oh, poor Larry! He's a recalcitrant, you know. I never can get him to do his duty."

"Then no one ever will," laughed Holland. "He must be like Mr. Callander."

Kitty pouted. "Comparisons are odious! You have n't been here for ever so long. What have you been doing? We've been making a President. I believe, though, you are to be a Governor presently," she added archly.

"All nonsense," Hugh said bluntly.

"It must be true," mocked Kitty. "You're getting beautifully pink. Do you know any of the people here, by the way? Have you seen Miss Ashley? She's quite a belle—when Betty is n't around."

"The charming woman I met at your last dinner two years ago? My dear Mrs. Innes, how could I find her in the back counties?"

"She's here to-day, and so is Sue Tempest. But have you spoken to Mrs. Callander?"

Hugh laughed. "No," he confessed; "and I've got to. Who's the big man in the corner?"

"Don't you know?" Kitty looked across the room with her chin in the air. "That's Nicholas Morton. You've heard, of course?"

Hugh frowned slightly. "I've only just come."

"They say he's engaged to Betty Callander. Isn't he huge? He's so broad and so clumsy that Sue Tempest says she's sure he has his washing done by contract."

"I suppose it's a business to report Miss Callander engaged to all the monstrosities with money, is n't it?" he asked disgustedly.

Kitty laughed, coloring faintly. "I hope you don't think it my business."

"I'm a bear, Mrs. Innes. I beg pardon. Of course I did n't mean that!" Hugh blushed furiously.

"I knew you did n't, only sometimes I must pick you up, you're so blunt, Hugh. Really, you must go and speak to Mrs. Callander."

He made a grimace and went. The old lady was standing in the main drawing-room. She had on a burnished satin with beaded trimmings, and looked like a copper boiler.

"Oh, how do you do?" she said cheerfully, looking at him with an indifference which she did not feign. To her this young attorney from Missouri was a pawn on the chess-board of life, but she remembered that her husband wanted to see him. "Mr. Callander spoke of you," she added. "He's in his library, and he wished you to come straight there. I rather think you may stop, though, and see some of the girls. He's probably drinking Scotch and playing poker with some one."

"Miss Callander told me he did n't care for society," Hugh began, but she cut him short.

"Pardon me, here's the Russian Ambassador;" and she turned with a sweep of satin and beads, and figuratively fell on his excellency's neck.

Hugh made his way through the crowded room, amused at Mrs. Callander's unconscious snub, but thinking more coldly of Nicholas Morton, and the persistent coupling of rich men's names with Betty's. Could it be possible, he reflected bitterly, that money and worldly place had their weight even with her?

He knew but few people, and felt suddenly the isolation of the crowd. Beautiful women stared almost rudely, men glanced and failed to recognize. He found it difficult to make his way, and once or twice

he regretted coming. Then he saw Sue Tempest, and she nodded across a group of fashionables. She had a clear, fresh face, with boyishly direct eyes, and almost the lean, erect figure of a boy. Hugh tried to reach her, but a fresh influx of people bore him out of her vicinity, and he made his way to the library. The door was closed, and he was hesitating before it when he heard his name and turned to see Betty Callander detach herself from a group and come toward him.

"Open the door," she said softly. "I'll show you where to find uncle." Then, as he opened it, she slipped in, he followed, and she closed it behind them. "Oh, thank heaven!" she cried, and, leaning back against the wall, closed her eyes.

They were alone. The light on the library table was shaded, and the softly illumined room, with its long, low book-shelves, its costly rugs, its sudden quiet, was like a haven of rest after the brilliant scene beyond. Hugh stood looking at her in surprise. What new mood was this? It was Betty, still Betty the whimsical, the changeable, the wholly adorable. She opened her eyes and began to laugh.

"I feel like a poor little fish with a very big hook in its gills! Oh, how tired I get of it sometimes, and try to wriggle off." She stretched out both hands, smiling, her charming head thrown back. "It's awful to be a belle."

"Is it?" he smiled. "It does n't look so."

"Pshaw! Much you know—come!" she laughed. "I knew uncle wasn't here. He's in his den in there"—she pointed to another closed door. "You've got to go there presently, but sit down, tell me a lot of things. Oh, I stole away on purpose! I've no right to—it's rude to my aunt's guests; it's wicked, it's like—it's like stealing pears, as I used to—when I was ten. Is old man Higgins still there, down by Little Neck Meadow?"

"Yes, but the pear-tree's gone. It was struck by lightning last summer."

"Not the old one by the fence?" She looked up full of mischief. "Not my tree?"

He nodded.

"Oh, then, you stole them, too!"

"We all did."

She laughed delightedly. "You great boy, you! Sinner! How dear the old days were!" She had taken a high chair by the fire and leaned back in it, her fair head against the dark wood back. "I remember how I ran when Mr. Higgins scolded me. I jumped the low fence by the brook, and tore my stocking on the blackberry vines."

"I did n't wear any stockings," he said.

"Neither did I when I waded," she retorted. "I wonder if the

beach-bugs still crawl in that sand-hill. They tickled my toes and made me scream." She put up a slender hand, shading her eyes as she looked into the fire.

He watched her delightedly. He had not hoped for this glimpse of her apart from the others, this moment of old times. After a while she turned around.

"Why did n't you come to my dinner that night before you went away two years ago? You see I remember."

"We can't go to heaven when we want to," he replied; "at least, not without suicide, and it would have been suicide for me that night. I was engaged to pilot my state committee-men."

She raised her brows. "It's always politics! My uncle lives and breathes them, and now you. But tell me," she added, "tell me all about it. I see great things in your manner, Scylla and Charybdis passed. Come, my friend, tell me all about it."

She leaned a little toward him, smiling. The fire-light softened her face and shone on her fair hair and the shimmering folds of her gown; the jewel at her throat flashed like a star. Under her spell he began to talk, and little by little she drew him out until he was telling her the story of the last two years like a school-boy; the story of his struggles, his poverty, his debts, his defeats, and the meagre victory wrested from fate.

"It's more than two years ago now," he said, with his whimsical smile, "and I was a fool. I thought I was going to be Governor, but Jim Leslie beat me. I did n't know politics then. I did n't even suspect him until it was too late. I thought it was fair fighting. I was a green school-boy!"

"You thought it was fair fighting," she repeated softly, smiling a little, "and you were knifed in the back, was that it? Oh, I think I know!"

He gave her a quick, fine look, full of reverence and something more. "I hope you don't!" he flashed at her. "There are heights for you to walk on; down there were the dregs."

She flushed and her lip quivered a little. They were both passing beyond trivialities.

"It was this way," he continued. "I'd been doing my first electioneering work out among the people. I've always believed in getting back to them. I think I'm an advocate of the Australian ballot, but that's not in it. I had my delegates to the convention pledged, the primaries were all my way, there were enough to elect me, and Adams—you know Adams?" She nodded, smiling. "Adams had seventy-two; he was going to throw them to me, if they were necessary to defeat Leslie——"

"Was n't that a bargain?" she queried. "A political deal?"

He flushed hotly. "Yes," he admitted, "in a way, and I paid the piper. We came in strong; it seemed as if we had Leslie beaten, but you know Leslie had the old ring behind him, and the state bosses. Well, there were two ballots and no election, and it grew late; the bosses forced an adjournment. That was Tuesday night." He leaned back in his chair and laughed bitterly. "I remember I went to bed and dreamed I was Governor and"—he looked across at her, half laughing, half ashamed—"I was talking to you."

She colored, but laughed a little too.

He went on hurriedly: "Wednesday morning Leslie was elected. All the Adams men went over and half mine. I was sold. I believe it was cheap, too—so they told me—a matter of about ten thousand dollars."

"And Adams?" She leaned forward, looking at him earnestly. "You believe he sold himself?"

"No!" he said flatly. "No, not for money. I can't tell how that was; but the others! Oh, I know about them; some of the newspaper men told me of details. Good Lord! and I was dreaming of a fair election!"

He leaned forward, his hands clasped on his knee, staring at the fire; his strong face with its primitive lines and its deep-set gray eyes, full of shadows. Betty watched him, a strange flutter in her throat.

"And afterwards?" she said softly.

"I went back to the people, I exposed the ring," he replied passionately, "and they made me district attorney; you know the rest."

"Yes," she murmured; "they say you are like Folk."

He laughed bitterly. "They frequently call me a demagogue. The fact is, I'm a poor devil chained down by old debts. I've never had any money, and I grew up with spendthrift ways. Leslie is trying to defeat me now by digging up my defeats and my debts. They can't convict me of dishonesty, but they're trying to ruin me. And now"—he turned to her with a glow on his face which made it look boyish again—"I can't understand—but your uncle—he's simply fine—he sends to me and offers to put me on my feet. Once there! Ah. if I should accept his free offer! Heaven knows it tempts me."

Betty leaned back in her chair again, looking at him strangely.

"Does it seem cowardly to you?" he asked eagerly.

"No—no," she murmured gently.

"But—you understand?" he persisted, his face paling.

"The temptation?" she nodded; then she added suddenly: "Have you his letter?"

"It's in my pocket," he said simply. "I brought it. I don't see my way clear, but—Betty!"

She rose and stood, her hands on the mantel, her bright head bowed on them.

"It means safety, victory, everything," he said, in a low voice, "and he offers it in good faith. If I don't take it, I must give up everything to pay up, to work back to the old place. You know father left everything covered with debt. It seemed as if all the world lay between us yesterday, but if this clears up, if I rise, Betty——"

She raised a pale face and looked at him. "I want you to go in there and see him," she said, pointing. "They've gone, his other friends; I think there's no one there, unless it's old Dr. Chester. Go on, and afterwards, afterwards I shall know."

"You wish me——" he began impetuously.

She shook her head. "I shall not say a word. You choose!"

He was bewildered, and his look told her so.

"Go on!" she cried imperiously. "He's waiting."

"But——"

She thrust her fingers in her ears. "No, no!" she cried. "I'll none of it; a man must choose. Not a word, now——"

"Betty!"

The door behind him opened and some one spoke, but he did not hear it. She gathered up her trailing skirts in either hand and swept him a courtesy which her grandmother might have envied. Her face was pale, but her lips, her eyes, her whole expression, were smiling, softened, wholly charming. "I must go, sir; my guests wait. Think how you have made me neglect them! Afterwards I shall know—it is for you to decide. *My uncle has been good to me!*" She opened the door, still looking back at him. Her eyes seemed to challenge him to remember that Eli Callander was her uncle.

And with that thought he turned to meet him.

II.

OLD Eli Callander was sitting at the table in his den. It was littered with papers and official-looking envelopes, and various odds and ends, but he had cleared a space in the centre where he and Dr. Chester could play cards. They were playing them, too, at five cents a point—Eli Callander was thrifty in his own amusements—while he made a mint julep between deals.

He was massive, inclined to obesity, with a bald head, beetling brows, and deep-set, glowering eyes. "Wells of iniquity," thought the little old man opposite as he shuffled the pack, his quick, nimble old fingers busy with the cards, while his twinkling eyes observed his neighbor.

The shaded electric lamp over the table revealed every line in the two faces in a remarkable contrast. For shrewdness they were almost equally matched; in every other respect they were antipodal personali-

ties; yet Dr. Chester never journeyed east that he did not stop for a rubber with Eli Callander. He dealt out the cards now, moistening his thumb as he did it, for it was an old pack and refused to slip through his fingers.

"I hate to lick my thumb," he said, chuckling. "I reckon it is n't good manners, even in the Middle West. But you've got a durned old pack here, Eli."

"I've had 'em fifteen years," replied Eli calmly, putting in the last piece of mint and pushing the tall glass across the table.

"Well, I reckon they'll stick together inside of the next fifteen," the old doctor remarked cheerfully. "How much whiskey did you put into that, Eli? I'm not a drinking man."

"Three fingers," said Eli laconically.

"Looks like five," commented Dr. Chester amusedly. "I'll have to look sharp or my thumbs will get limp."

A negro servant came in noiselessly, bringing some dispatches, and went out without closing the door.

"Shut that door!" Eli shouted; then he opened his dispatches slowly, slitting each envelope with his pen-knife. "Niggers and idiots always leave doors open," he remarked, "and I've had lumbago for a week."

"I told you to put on a plaster," said Dr. Chester.

"Shucks!" said Eli impatiently.

"No, plasters," replied his neighbor, twinkling; "also pills."

Eli Callander finished reading his dispatches and put them down; then he, too, sorted his cards. It was his lead, but he did not play. Instead he sipped his julep. "See here, William," he said at last, "what's become of Harriet Hopper?"

"She's out at the Hollands'. Some one was cruel enough to fore-close the mortgage on her house before she got the money to save it, from her sale of those meadowlands. Young Holland got his cousin to take her in."

"The devil!" said Eli, fishing a bit of mint out of his glass. "I suppose he's going to put his oar in her affairs, then?"

Dr. Chester nodded. "There's some talk about Finlaison cheating her; you know he got those meadowlands of hers. Leslie's in it too. I've heard some things."

Eli eyed him, still ruminating. "What things?"

"Something about the survey of the meadows. Finlaison did it for Leslie, then the two of them got the better of her."

"A pack of lies!" remarked Mr. Callander. "I've employed Finlaison for twenty years. He's a mean sneak, but he does n't steal. Hand me that bottle. What's young Holland going to do with Harriet Hopper? I reckon he won't marry her for her money, any way."

Dr. Chester's eyes twinkled. "She knitted his first socks for him. I calculate that Miss Harriet's turned seventy. She's a good woman, Eli. Don't you remember when she nursed your mother in her last illness, thirty odd years ago?"

"I can't remember everything," Eli retorted. "I reckon she got paid for it. Nobody does anything for nothing."

"She never got a cent," said Dr. Chester warmly. "She did it for love and friendship."

"Love and fiddle-sticks!" ejaculated the magnate.

His old friend eyed him again. "Derned mean old critter!" he thought. "He'd skin a flea if he could sell its hide for sixpence!"

"What's Hugh Holland going to do?" Eli went on, unconscious of his critic. "That's what I want to know, and you keep drivelling off into sentiment. You never did have any more business head than a turnip, William Chester. I wonder why in the world you aren't in petticoats!"

"Got me into trousers early, Eli," the doctor twinkled. "My mother made 'em, bless her heart! I never knew which way I was going to school, they were cut so equally. As for Hugh Holland, I heard he was going to sue Finlaison. He's a smart fellow, but he's pretty well tied down for money, and that political crowd is pressing him hard."

"Hipped, is he?" Callander looked interested; he seemed to have forgotten the cards.

"Has n't anything. His father left the little property in a bad shape, and—well, Hugh went the pace once. He's all right now, straight as a string, but poor. They're making him district attorney again. We think he came mighty near being Governor, but, Lord! the ring got him out! I believe it's your precious ring, Eli," the little old man added, with amusement.

Eli took another piece of mint between his teeth and bit it in two. "All this gabble about 'rings' is tommyrot," he remarked scornfully.

"Well, I reckon a good deal of it rotted—when Kalyph shot himself," retorted the doctor, eying him with his bright sidelong look. "Could n't see, don't see now, what that man shot himself for. President of the Illinois Traction, President of the United Pacific, Vice-President of the Iroquois Amalgamated. Lord! with his millions and his nice family! Beats me!"

"Morbid!" grunted Callander. "I knew him."

"Humph!" said Dr. Chester. "He used to tell me newspaper jokes. He subscribed to every funny paper out."

"I tell you he *was* morbid!" reiterated Callander, striking the table with his fist.

"Maybe," said Dr. Chester, unconvinced. "Maybe. You kind of stepped right into his shoes, Eli."

"Stepped into his shoes?" thundered Callander. "I tell you, I never profited a hair's breadth by his death! They all took it out of me. I've been slaving at his desks ever since. I wish the derved ass had thrown his pistol into the Mississippi!"

"He was a saving man, he did n't want to rust it," said the doctor quietly. "Rich people always save their potato parings."

Eli poured out more whiskey. The doctor ran over his cards for the ninety-ninth time. There was a long silence. "If you're going to play, Eli," he chirped at last, "it's your turn."

But Callander had risen, stiffly because of his lumbago, and going slowly across the room he opened the door into the library, listened a moment, and then spoke. As he came back he threw down his cards. "I reckon you can go, William," he said calmly.

Dr. Chester got up without a word, his eyes dancing.

"Hugh Holland is in there talking to my niece," Callander went on. "I've just called him. I've got to talk business to him."

"Hugh here?" Dr. Chester laughed gently. "Well, well!" he said. "I'll go talk to Betty. I reckon he'd a heap rather be in my shoes, too. I did n't drink all that julep, Eli. Don't throw it on the coals, unless you want an explosion. It's either more than three fingers or it's fire-water. It's left a blazed trail in my insides," he added, chuckling.

At the door he met young Holland and greeted him affectionately. "Callander tells me Betty's in there," he said, "and I'm going to see if she'll show me her tongue. She never would when she was a child. She said it was her own, and she would n't put it out for any old doctor!"

As he went out Hugh Holland closed the door behind him and walked swiftly across the room, his head up and a fine friendliness in the expression of his strong, thin face. He held out his hand warmly; for a moment there was a rush of feeling; he thought of this old man as Betty's uncle and his own possible benefactor.

"Sit down," said Eli. "I want to talk to you."

The younger man obeyed. As he did so, his eye took in the details of the room. There was luxury enough, besides all the paraphernalia of a busy magnate's office. Something in the very atmosphere breathed of big financial problems, of far-reaching policies, and the stout, bald-headed figure in the centre, of what did it remind him? A spider! It came to Holland like a flash that he had no part in it all, that these things were antipodal to his personality, that they stood for all he was battling against. Nothing could have jarred more on his exalted mood than the material aspect of the place.

Eli, meanwhile, was making another julep, apparently for his new visitor, and after a while Holland began to thank him for his letter, rather awkwardly, the first flush of gratitude strangely dissipated. Eli waved his hand. "Don't mention it," he said. "I'm interested in you, Holland," he went on, hunting for a lump of sugar. "You're the coming man out our way. I'm lending a hand, that's all. Have a julep?"

Holland thanked him, but left it standing. "I think it fine of you, Mr. Callander," he said. "I don't know any one else who would think of offering to do as much."

Callander laughed dryly. "Well," he said deliberately, "I've known what it was to be down on my luck myself. We won't talk of it."

"My dear sir——" began the younger man.

Callander interrupted him. "Tell me how it is. You've got the voters all your way again, I suppose? It's only when you come into convention that the delegates get tampered with, eh?"

"That's it," said Hugh. "It's the old game, but I believe I'll beat them, Mr. Callander. That old ring has been exposed, and the people don't like Boss Leslie."

"Oh, ah, yes!" said the old man thoughtfully, casting a shrewd glance at his visitor. "I suppose you've got your finger right on the public pulse. That seems to be your specialty; that's the reason we've got to reckon with you, young man! That reminds me, those cases you've been hunting up against the corporations—the newspapers have been full of them—what are you doing with them?"

"They're in good shape," replied Holland eagerly. "I've got new evidence and plenty of it."

Callander drew a pattern on the table with his stubby forefinger. "How about Harriet Hopper? Old Chester has been telling me a lot of tommyrot about her. Who's foreclosed her mortgage?"

"Finlaison," said Hugh promptly. "But——" He leaned forward in his chair, looking eagerly at Eli. "Mr. Callander, have you any idea who is behind Finlaison? He could n't handle even Miss Harriet's property alone, we all know that, but he's done it, by hook or by crook, and got all her affairs into a hole. *I want the man behind Finlaison!* I thought it was Leslie—or perhaps Nickers—but it's neither. It's a scoundrel, sir, a black-hearted scoundrel. He's got Miss Harriet's property through Finlaison, and now the trolley is going through below Little Neck Meadow, and he's sold out a block of that land for double, before the case can get into court. I'm going to enjoin him. I'd give"—Holland threw back his head excitedly—"I'd give all I possess to get his name."

"I reckon you are n't worth much, then," was Eli's dry comment.

Holland flushed. "I'm not, Mr. Callander; but I did n't mean it as a limitation. Have you any idea who it is?"

Eli grinned. "Want to bribe me, eh?"

"I meant nothing of that sort, of course, but——"

"Corruption in office! You're as bad as your quarry, young man!" chuckled Callander.

His tone grated on Hugh's mood. "I did n't mean it in that way. I rather think you like to goad me, Mr. Callander. But it's a brutal shame, the way that old lady has been robbed."

"She ought to have had a guardian appointed, if she could n't take care of herself. I shan't shed any tears so long as I'm not plucked, though," Eli said; "and if I were you, I'd drop her cases. Leslie's in with Finlaison, and there's bad blood there because of your election rumpus. You young men make too much row over pins. I'd keep clear of the Hopper row."

"I'm her attorney," Holland said doggedly.

The old man chewed mint. "You're going to hit Nickers again, too, in those corporation suits, and Leslie?" he remarked deliberately.

"Hard," affirmed Hugh.

"I would n't," advised the old man again, looking up suddenly and meeting the younger one's eyes. "They're good, sound party men, so is Finlaison, and we need 'em. We're going to have a hot campaign next summer. It's going to be a close fight. What's the use?"

"It may not be good politics," admitted the young lawyer, flushing a little, "but it's plain honesty."

Eli poured a little more whiskey into his own glass. "You're young yet," he observed blandly. "It's no use; money has been used, and will be. They'll say it's all because Leslie whipped you."

"Leslie did n't whip me. He bought the convention."

Eli smiled grimly. "The same thing," he remarked. "Our delegates are like the old negro's friends: 'Some ob us ez fer Roosevelt,' he said, 'an' some ob us ez fer Bryan, but most ob us ez fer sale.'"

Holland stared obstinately into the fire, the fine lines about his mouth hardening. "These cases must come on, every one of them," he said flatly.

Eli rose and, going to the hearth, leaned his elbow on the mantel; his deep-set eyes glowed ominously. "I think you are a friend of mine—or should be," he said pointedly.

The younger man looked up; every vestige of color left his face. "I am," he declared sharply.

"Then I think these cases will *not* go on. It's an important matter. We need Nickers, Nickers is a friend of mine, so is Leslie, Finlaison works for me, has for years. I make it a point, sir, that you drop these cases."

There was a dead silence.

The two men looked at each other across the fire. After a long moment Holland put his hand in his pocket and drew out Eli's check. He tore it across twice and laid the pieces on the table. Then he rose to his feet, his face white.

"I misunderstood you, Mr. Callander," he said, with forced calm. "I have no price."

Callander's face turned a dull red. "You're a young fool!" he snapped. "I wash my hands of you. You're committing political suicide."

Hugh Holland seemed suddenly to see a vision of Betty Callander, distant and magnificent, Betty with her face turned toward him and her challenging words: "My uncle has been kind to me!" He laughed bitterly. "So be it," he said. "I have suicided, then. I bid you good evening, Mr. Callander."

Eli said nothing; he merely looked at him out of the tail of his eye, his head down and his massive brows lowered. His very attitude seemed the embodiment of a threat.

Holland went out and closed the door.

III.

Two hours later Betty Callander bade the last formal guest farewell, and old Mrs. Callander went up-stairs to be removed from the copper-boiler, which was too full of whale-bones to be endured after the ceremonial hours.

Betty, alone at the head of the stairs, glanced again at the library door. It was still closed, but she knew that Holland had gone without a word to her. It could mean but one thing, and her heart rose with a feeling of exultation, only to sink again. Did he believe that she shared her uncle's views?

She thought of their parting in the library with a feeling of embarrassment. They had reached a point where neither had considered the more trivial conventionalities, and she felt sure that she had betrayed too much feeling. Her cheek reddened at the thought. And he? What did he mean by going away without a word? What had Mr. Callander said? Betty's mind was restlessly keen and alert, and, piecing together what Holland had told her with bits of desultory talk at her uncle's table, she had divined much that was behind it all. She knew well enough that both Leslie and Nickers were intimates of Eli's, and she had seen Finlaison going in and out of the house for four years.

Reviewing all that she had said, she could recall nothing that identified her with her uncle's point of view. She had entirely forgotten her declaration of his kindness, and she wondered what could have occurred to send Holland out of the house apparently disgusted with all

its inmates. Betty walked to and fro in the hall, thinking it over. She had been surprised at the pleasure it had given her to see him come up the stairs. He had seemed so unlike the other people, so unlike the mere men of society with whom she had been surrounded for four years. His strength and his repose had been marked even in those few moments when he had stood by the stairs talking commonplaces, and afterwards, in the library, he had been himself, the same enthusiastic, strong-willed, zealous man she had known so long. She followed his foot-steps unconsciously across the hall and through the long drawing-rooms, wondering a little what he had thought of it all, and found herself at last in the library, standing by the hearth. The chair he had occupied was there, just as he had pushed it aside, and she had a curious feeling that he must still be there in spirit.

She stood looking down at the red embers on the hearth and seeing in them the old childish days when she and Hugh had been so near together. Her trust in him, after all, had grown up with her. She remembered how quick he had always been to resent an injury, how hot in the defense of the right. A little knight errant; no wonder that he was still tilting with wind-mills! Yet why should he imagine that she had grown any less quixotic? Why condemn her with her uncle? And did not his departure without a word look like it? Why——

She was startled by an elevated voice in her uncle's room, and looked over at the door, to find it ajar. With no thought of playing eavesdropper, she stood for a moment rooted to the spot, her mind refusing to understand at first the full significance of the words which reached her ear.

"I tell you he refused pointblank to take the money," Eli's voice was saying angrily; "so what'll you make of that?"

"We'll have to make what we can of it, Mr. Callander," came the reply in smoother tones, tones which Betty knew immediately. "There are always ways of stating cases."

"Humph!" said Eli. "Sly-boots! I suppose you're up to your usual tricks."

His visitor laughed, not a pleasant laugh, but a gentle and propitiating one. "I think I can state this case quite effectively, quite! Put the pieces together. . . . Certainly, my dear sir, I have seen it."

"Oh, that's your game, is it?" Callander said. "It's pretty rotten, Finlaison."

"Quite so, sir, but the people"—Finlaison had to laugh again—"he's very fond of appealing to the people, and the people understand little things like this. The people——"

Betty thrust her fingers in her ears. Suddenly she knew herself

for an eavesdropper, and her face turned scarlet. Then she ran out of the room and dropped in a little heap on the lowest step of the stairs going up to the floor above. From that vantage-ground she could watch the front door, herself unseen. She watched an hour, then she saw Finlaison come out of her uncle's room and go out alone. For a moment afterwards she continued to sit there, then she took her courage in both hands and, rising, all the crumpled prettiness of her dress finding a way to rearrange itself and make her even lovelier than before, she walked hurriedly back across the library and, giving herself no time to think, opened the door of the den and confronted Mr. Callander.

He was at his table writing a letter, and he looked up surprised as she advanced upon him and, stopping on the opposite side of the table, stood looking at him strangely, her face very pale.

"Uncle Eli," she said, "I heard what Mr. Finlaison said to you just now."

Mr. Callander eyed her a moment in silence, then he laid down his pen. "Which keyhole?" he asked briefly.

Betty reddened. "I never listen at keyholes, Uncle Eli."

"You just said you did."

"Your door was open into the library," she explained. "I did n't mean to listen to a word, but I did hear two or three sentences about some one refusing to take money. Were they—were you speaking of Mr. Holland?"

Old Eli took a piece of sassafras bark out of his pocket and carefully chipped a bit off with his pen-knife. "Why do you want to know?" he asked, without emotion.

"I want to know because——" She caught her breath; his glowering eyes were always disconcerting, and to-night she felt guilty of a breach of faith—"because I heard what Finlaison said about using the check. Mr. Holland told me to-night about the way he was defeated two years ago. Uncle Eli, is Mr. Finlaison going to defeat him again?"

Mr. Callander bit off some of the sassafras bark. "Is that what you wanted to know?" he asked mildly.

"Yes." Betty's face was still flushed, her eyes shone, all her fighting blood was up.

"It's none of your business," Eli said with sudden sharpness. "You'd no right to listen. That's my answer."

"Uncle Eli——"

"That's my answer."

Betty stood a moment looking at him, the color fading out of her face, even out of her lips. "I shall warn Mr. Holland," she said in a low voice.

Mr. Callander turned around in his chair and viewed her attentively. "Of what?" he inquired.

"Of Finlaison's intentions."

"And how do you know that Finlaison referred to Holland?"

"Oh, I don't know," Betty cried impetuously; "only, I'm sure of it, and I shall tell him."

Eli laughed. "There's a saying about locking the stable door after the horse is stolen. Don't be a fool, Betty."

"I shall tell him," she said steadily.

"Do," retorted Mr. Callander; "but be sure you tell it straight, and then he'll laugh in your face. You're your father's child, Betty. He was a precious fool when it came to business; that's the reason he left you so badly off."

"Oh, thank heaven he was!" Betty exclaimed devoutly.

But her uncle took no further notice of her. He picked up his pen and went on writing. She watched him a moment, fascinated, wondering what there really was behind the mask of that rugged, heavy face. Then she turned, with a feeling of complete defeat, and walked out of the room.

Once out of the sphere of his influence, though, her mind worked rapidly. She knew that Holland must be leaving town soon, and reflected that she could not reach him quickly. She did not know his telephone number at the apartments where he stayed, and a hasty search of the book failed to enlighten her. She went to the table in the library and dashed off a note, then ran up-stairs. Later Mrs. Callander was going with her to a ball, and Betty usually stole the few hours' intermission for rest, but now she hurried on a long, fur-lined coat over her rich reception dress and, slipping quietly down-stairs again, let herself out into the night.

The weather had grown rapidly worse and a light snow was falling, but she was fond of cold, and, clasping her furs at her throat, she set off at a brisk pace. However, the gale increased rapidly and it began to sleet. Seeing an empty electric hansom passing, she hailed it and was whirled off to a small apartment-house in the less pretentious quarter of the town. She had found the name of it on Holland's card, but the place was not familiar to her and poorly attended, so that she went to the elevator before she found a tardy bell-boy. To him she gave her letter and some money to insure its speedy delivery, and turned with a feeling of relief. There was, indeed, a moment of hesitation. She wanted to see Hugh, to speak to him herself, but her pride flew to arms because he had left the house so unceremoniously, and she would not ask for him. Conventionalities did not weigh much with her—Betty was too fearless and too right-minded to hesitate in a good cause; but his apparent indifference stung her. She had done her best

to reach him with a warning before he left town, and now her one object was to escape without meeting him, for she shrank from the thought of making any friendly advances after his slight of her; she interpreted his hasty departure as a slight, and blushed at the thought that she might be said to be seeking a meeting here.

However, the hall was vacant, and she drew a breath of relief. But before she reached the outer door she heard a quick step behind her and some one spoke her name. She turned, her face flushed with embarrassment. It was Finlaison.

"Why, Miss Callander!" he said.

Betty replied coldly to his greeting, stiffening at the sight of him. But he ignored her manner with a cool assurance that was habitual.

"It's a bad night," he said briskly. "I suppose your aunt's with you. Shall I call the carriage?"

Betty's flush deepened with vexation. She felt as if he knew her errand, or had divined it by some sixth sense, and his very tone was significant. "Thanks, I won't trouble you," she said coldly. "I have a cab."

But he was effusive, he walked with her to the door and opened it for her. A swirl of snow blew in their faces.

"It's too bad a night for you to be out," he said with concern. "I'm afraid you'll take cold."

"I never take cold," she retorted quickly, and ran down the steps.

But he would not let her escape, he followed her to call the cab and help her in, he even gave the address to the man. As she was whirled away Betty saw him still standing at the curb, the snow collecting on his shoulders and that thin smile of his on his thin lips. She leaned back in the corner of the cab and shivered. She had known for years that the man admired her, watched her, followed her, with a deadly persistence, and sometimes she was almost afraid of him. She tried, too, to reconcile herself to his presence in that apartment. What was his errand there? What did he intend to do when he went back? She felt certain that he intended to go back, and it filled her with a vague feeling of uneasiness.

IV.

WHEN Hugh Holland first realized that Mr. Callander had sent for him with the bald intention of bribing him to drop the cases against his lieutenants, he had been far too indignant to fully understand all that it meant to them, and must mean later to him. On the long journey home, however, he had time to think, and, recovering from the first flush of anger at the insult, saw that his inevitable refusal had been the signal for a protracted struggle.

As the train began to cross the vast level lands of the Middle West,

he looked out across the wide reaches of prairie-like country with dreamy eyes. How vast the change between this and the gay and beautiful capital city! How illimitable seemed the long russet spaces, the far distant horizon, keenly white below purple clouds! He could see the wind ripple through the long grasses, as a current ripples through a summer sea, and once or twice a flock of birds flew low, just within the line of his vision. Then he saw a tree, solitary, stripped of leaves, seared by a stroke of lightning, but erect and towering in the prairie. It reminded him of Eli, seared by the lightning of age, yet standing erect. But for how long? Ah, that was the riddle!

He knew that Eli Callander was strong, that he would fight to the last ditch, and began to suspect that it was the old man's concealed antagonism that he had been battling for years. If Callander, and Callander's enormous interests, were involved in the careers of Leslie and Nickers and that miserable sneak Finlaison, then Callander must be identified with the whole project that had carried corruption into the legislature and cast out and beaten all the smaller companies, on the plea that the Interstate Pure Food monopoly was the only one using pure materials.

The bill that had disfranchised the smaller concerns on account of the charges of improper methods had been pushed through the legislature by a gigantic lobby, but the exposure which followed had created a sensation too immense even for Callander's resources, if Callander were, indeed, the financial arm. Was he behind the trolley? The Illinois Traction had been behind Pure Food, and that might mean Callander. That thought flashed upon Holland; he suddenly remembered that Callander had parried all his questions in regard to the man behind Finlaison, and it now came to him that perhaps Eli himself was that enigmatical person. But to pursue this train of thought led to a sequel that was even more appalling. Finlaison had cheated Miss Harriet Hopper to an extent which almost put him within the reach of the law, clever as he was; and if it transpired that the magnate was behind this accomplished knave—! Holland knew that his quarrel with Eli meant a complete estrangement from all the Callander connection. He thought of Betty with a pang of keen despair. He remembered her bright face as she turned it toward him with her declaration of devotion to her uncle; he interpreted her words as a challenge: if he could not be friends with her benefactor, he could not be friends with her!

These reflections were not cleared away when he became conscious that the changing landscape had assumed a more familiar aspect. Beyond the rolling prairies he caught now the outlines of the hills, and here and there a cottonwood or a white ash or a maple reminded him that he was approaching home, and at last the train slowed down at

the station that stood below the new bridge at Little Paradise. It was an unusual hour for arrivals, and there were but few loungers there, and no one greeted Hugh with cordiality; instead he felt, rather than saw, that he was the object of much curiosity. He perceived a change, a chill and aloofness.

He went directly to his little down-town office, up-stairs in a dingy old building, and but sparsely and poorly furnished. As he unlocked the door and entered the two rooms that had been untouched since his departure, he thought involuntarily of Betty, Betty in the beautiful library of the stately Washington house, surrounded with light and luxuries and harmonious effects. Then he glanced at his dingy book-cases, at the worn matting on the floors, the old map on the wall, and laughed bitterly. What had he to offer to an heiress? Yet at the thought her eyes, soft and beautiful and steadfast, came back to him, and he knew instinctively that she was too true a woman to consider any of these things. He felt a sudden shame, as if he had undervalued her, and, going to the window, he threw it open and stood looking up, not down into the narrow, crooked street, but up into the clear sky. The very thought of her was uplifting. She had a right to choose, and she would choose as her heart bade her, and her conscience—he knew of old how tender and pure that was; he would believe nothing else!

That afternoon he went up to see old Miss Hopper. She was staying at his cousin's house at the cross-roads, and he found her in the little, old-fashioned sitting-room, trimming the geraniums in the window-box. She was an old woman, tall and slender, with the virginal outlines of a girl. Her hair was snow-white, but she had the face of a child, a child with little fine lines and wrinkles in the soft pale cheeks and about the tender eyes. She smiled happily at the sight of Holland and took off her spectacles, holding them in her hand with the withered geranium leaves.

"Hugh," she said, "my butterfly came out of its chrysalis, and it's an emperor."

She had a gentle way of fostering everything living, and had fed an ailing humming-bird for a week on sugar and water.

"Miss Harriet, we're going to bring your suit into court next week," Hugh said gravely.

Miss Harriet sucked in her breath with a queer little gasp, like a child who is going to cry. "Oh, Hugh, I'm—I'm scared of it!" she whispered, between tears and laughter.

He smiled. "It will be all right, Miss Harriet," he said reassuringly. "We're going to win, and we're going to get back those acres down by the Neck. Then you can sell to the trolley company at your own terms."

Miss Harriet was amazed. "The trolley? Is it going through there? Why, I thought——" She stopped, the color creeping up to her white hair; suddenly she realized how they had meant to swindle her and blushed for them. Her gentle heart had never borne any man ill-will. "How clever you are, Hugh!" she added simply, looking at him with fond admiration.

He smiled bitterly. "I was very stupid about it, Miss Harriet," he replied, with unsparing honesty. "I did not know a word of the trolley going there until some one told me."

Miss Harriet looked out of the window across the brown meadows with brooding eyes; the winter day was closing, and through the soft grays of twilight she could just discern the outlines of the old cedar that marked her boundary line. Beyond was a dark strip of woodland and then the land dipped. She saw snow in the hollows. A long fold of deeper purple marked the reach of level land, with a mist lying on its outer rim, and almost the lure of desert places in its vastness—flat far as the eye could reach, as it is sometimes in the Middle West—while above, in the upper sky, a white light shone still in the drift of violet clouds. "I hate to do it," she demurred humbly. "I hate to think any one meant to cheat me, Hugh. I reckon it must have been some mistake, after all. Jimmy Finlaison used to be a right nice little boy, only——"

"Only, he was a sneak, Miss Harriet," Hugh interpolated dryly.

She looked at him with mild, troubled eyes. "I would n't say that, Hugh," she hesitated softly. "I would n't go as far as that. I never should have thought anything if he had n't always *said* that the other boys stole my plums and he did n't!"

Holland laughed, some of the sadness slipping out of his face. "I think he'll say just that about your acres, Miss Harriet, when we corner him," he remarked.

"Do you think he could? Is there any one else he could blame?"

"Perhaps; I can't say yet," he replied, a little tightening of his lips showing the strong lines of repression which had been growing in his face. "Very probably he'll find some one to blame if we don't. He's resourceful, cunning, dangerous, and he's got the whip-hand behind Callander. How, I can't quite discover yet."

The old woman looked gently perplexed. To her the impending suit was more alarming than a problem in algebra. In her heart she regarded the young man at her side as a kind of Solomon come to judgment. "I hate to blame any one," she said.

Holland looked at her gentle, troubled face and smiled, a sweetness in his eyes that was almost like a woman's. "I'm not going to let you blame any one, Miss Harriet. I'm going to do it myself. In the first place, I begin to see things plainly. You know Finlaison pushed

you to the wall with that mortgage, when a few weeks' delay would have brought you the money to save it."

Miss Harriet nodded, winking back some tears. "If he'd only waited, Hugh, I could have saved it—and I loved it."

Holland's lips tightened again; he broke off a geranium leaf with a vicious snap of his fingers. "Miss Harriet, he did it on purpose. He wanted to get your lands because of the trolley, and he wanted to make sure that they did n't cut Eli Callander's above Little Neck Meadow. I'm afraid that Mr. Callander and the Illinois Traction were behind him."

"Oh, Hugh!" she cried, aghast and tremulous. "I can't believe it. It seems iniquitous."

"It is iniquitous. Eli Callander will call it plain business, though, until I get back those fifty acres."

Poor Miss Harriet was badly frightened; her hands trembled. For fifty years she had stood in awe of the town magnate, and here was this young iconoclast talking heresy to her, and he was her attorney. She changed the geranium leaves and her spectacles to the other hand and wiped her eyes. "The whole thing frightens me to death, Hugh," she confessed. "I don't believe I'll ever get through with it!"

"Nonsense!" he answered cheerily. "I'll see you through, Miss Harriet. That's why I'm your attorney," he added with a smile.

She looked at him with affectionate pride. "I can't seem to believe it, Hugh! Why, I rocked you to sleep when you were two years old."

"Well, I'm not going to let you catch me napping now," he laughed.

She patted his shoulder. "You always were so smart. I'm not sure I don't feel prouder than your mother did."

He winced. The narrowness of the life here, and this fond old woman thought him successful! "Don't praise me until I get back your acres," he said, a little sadly. "Wait until I succeed."

"I know you will," she assured him gently, and with absolute faith.

Later, as Holland walked down the street to his office again, the lamps were lighted and there was an air of cheerfulness about the old houses, that set back from the sidewalk, almost after the fashion of New England towns—as was natural, for New Englanders had been the first settlers, and they had called the little town in the sweet new prairie-land "Paradise," because it was a paradise of hope to them. There were two towns now, Great and Little Paradise, connected by a quaint old bridge across the river just above Little Neck Meadow, where the disputed acres lay. There was wealth, and the homes showed it. Holland noticed the air of comfort and competence about these places, even in the preoccupation of his mind, but his thoughts were

more and more concentrated upon Callander's connection with the cases he had in hand. Every bit of evidence that he had against Leslie and Nickers might be doubled-edged, for all he knew to the contrary, and he felt the vast importance of knowledge before he struck the final blow.

He was startled out of this reverie by a familiar voice, and old Dr. Chester, who had returned from Washington on the same train with him, greeted him.

"Been out to see Miss Harriet, I reckon," he said amiably.

"Yes, I'm going to bring her case into court to-morrow," Holland replied. "It's on the docket a little sooner than I expected, but it does n't matter."

The little man gave him a keen upward glance. "Working pretty hard, eh? I'll have to keep an eye on you. By the way, I hear they want to run you for Governor."

Holland laughed. "I don't know," he said. "There's plenty of opposition. All the Interstate Pure Food howlers are against me, and I suspect that there will be plenty more."

"I reckon you're more friendly with Eli Callander than you used to be," suggested the doctor tentatively.

"You think that because you saw me in his house?"

Dr. Chester nodded. "Partly," he admitted; "partly; but there are other things."

"In reality, I am less so," Holland said dryly.

The old man stopped and drew a pattern on the ground with his cane. "How's that?" he asked curiously.

Holland resented what seemed to him bald curiosity, but he could not afford to offend so old a friend. "Simply that Mr. Callander and I had a final disagreement on the very evening that you saw me there."

"I wish you'd tell me about it."

The young man glanced at the older one with something like surprised displeasure.

"Oh, I know what you think," Dr. Chester said; "but I've a reason. I'm your friend, Hugh; I knew your father. I'm a friend to Eli too, but, Lord! we all know Eli! He's behind the Illinois Traction Company, and you're pledged to fight the two companies, are n't you?"

Holland nodded, his glance more concentrated and thoughtful. "What do you mean, Dr. Chester?"

The doctor dug a hole with his cane. "I mean," he said slowly, "that Finlaison came back here to spread a story about you and the Illinois Traction. He'll be sowing it broadcast soon."

"What is it?" Holland asked dryly.

The old man eyed him like a wakeful sparrow. "He says you've

been paid to lose the cases against the companies; *that he's seen Callander's check to you.*"

V.

WHILE the young attorney faced anew the trials of his office in the homely surroundings of the old town, where the free wind of the prairies swept away the vagaries and the foibles of city life, and stripped emotions to the fiercer and more elemental aspects of passions, Betty was living in a far different atmosphere.

The season at Washington was at its height, and the high-tide of fashion just on the eve of the ebb, for Lent drew near. The daily rounds went on, however—teas, receptions, dinners, bridge, and theatre parties without end. Sometimes Betty drew her breath and pressed her hands over her eyes, trying to recall the shadow-flecked path, the trout stream, and Primrose Rock. Was the blood-root in bloom yet, or the wild cucumber, she wondered.

Meanwhile, her chaperon had no such rural dreams. She had taken to the stream of fashion as an elderly and rheumatic duck might take to water and find it not altogether as delightful as in her younger days. Mrs. Callander swam, but she ruffled the stream and fell behind when the other ducks were circling serenely in golden pools of success; yet she struggled on, determined and optimistic, if not entirely hilarious.

It was one of her fixed ideas that it was necessary to have a box at the opera when notables were likely to be there, just as it was fashionable to have symptoms of appendicitis and a motor-car. The box at the opera was the only one of her whims that she could always induce her husband to finance. Eli believed in sustaining his reputation as a millionaire, and his position in society, or, rather, what he imagined to be his position, at any cost; his economies were sordid enough, but they were exercised in more unnoticed places. Where money counted he used it, and used it with an apparently generous hand. So Mrs. Callander sat in state in the front of the box, in her most splendid gown, wearing her already famous jewels, and looking a great deal more like a dressmaker's block than a society leader, but, at least, happily unconscious that people thought so.

Yet her box was always a centre of attraction, because Betty Callander was there. Not even her aunt's vagaries could overshadow Betty's beauty, and the girl's charm and graciousness of manner made up for the older woman's shortcomings.

It was the twenty-second of February, the house was full to overflowing with an unusually brilliant audience, and Mrs. Callander's box was filled with guests whom she had selected with an eye to social conditions. She had invited a cabinet minister's wife, a detached

Senator, and one or two diplomats, and was so occupied, indeed, with these important personages that she did not overhear all that was said behind her, and during one of the pauses in the opera Sue Tempest, who was also one of her guests, got an opportunity to hold some low-voiced conversation with Betty.

"Did you know that Mr. Holland was in town again?" she said, leaning over the back of her chair. "I saw him yesterday."

Betty Callander colored, but she returned Sue's glance steadily. "No," she said lightly; "I have not seen him."

"He's been here since Wednesday," Sue continued relentlessly. "Jack had some talk with him three days ago. I sent a note down to ask him to come to dinner to-morrow. Will you come, too?"

Distinctly aware that Sue was probing her, and angry and hurt at Holland's failure to answer her own letter, Betty resented this little manoeuvre. "Thank you," she said, with studied kindness of manner; "I've got an engagement."

Sue swung more around in her chair and leaned over; the music had begun again and under its cover she could whisper. "You know what Mr. Finlaison is saying?" She glanced, as she spoke, toward Finlaison, who was sitting beside Mrs. Callander, having just returned from Missouri that night.

Betty shook her head, suddenly aware that she was blushing crimson; in reality, she was thinking of Finlaison on the day when she had carried her note to Holland.

"He's saying that Hugh Holland has taken a bribe in those cases out in Missouri," Sue explained.

Betty started violently. "What cases?" she asked quickly. "I don't understand."

"I'm not sure I know. I'll ask Bobby;" and Sue leaned toward a young man in the front of the box, and whispered in his ear.

"Interstate Pure Food and Illinois Traction," he said promptly, and turned vividly pink. What in the mischief was Sue driving at, he wondered; he had known Sue all her life.

"Both companies?" Betty asked softly, vaguely conscious that the opera was going on and distinctly aware that she would always hate it.

"Have n't you seen the morning papers?" Bobby Durand inquired surprised, and, as she shook her head, he added: "There's a long column about Holland's chances being blasted, a description of his career, and the recent discovery that he has been bribed by those two monopolies that he's been attacking with such a noise. The trouble is, Miss Callander, that these demagogues are nearly all preposterous hypocrites."

"Which of the companies is supposed to have bribed Mr. Holland?" Betty asked coolly.

Sue reddened; she had meant to tell Betty, but all at once she hated her task. "Illinois Traction," she said, "and, oh dear! Bobby just said both."

"You mean my uncle"—Betty gave her a keen, straight look. "I never knew you to be afraid before, Sue."

"I was n't afraid," Sue protested; "but I thought it might hurt your feelings."

"It does," Betty said.

"I'm awfully sorry——"

"Of course; but you knew it all the time! Why do you do such things, Sue?"

"I suppose I can't help it!" Sue said abjectly. "Why did you answer me, Bob?"

"Good Lord! do you want to put it off on *me*?" exclaimed that young man plaintively. "I don't call that a square deal."

"It is n't; I was trying to sneak out," Sue said bluntly; "but I'll take it all back, Bob. I beg your pardon, but you never should know so much."

"There is n't a word of truth in it," Betty said, her breath coming hard; "not a word. I know; my uncle is behind both companies."

Bobby Durand writhed. "I beg your pardon," he said. "Of course I forgot that Mr. Callander was in both companies. It seemed as if there must be some fire where there was so much smoke, but I'm awfully sorry I let Sue lead me on into such iniquities."

Betty gave her undivided attention to the opera after that, apparently following every line of it with rapt attention. In reality, her mind was too busily engaged to respond even to the usual conventional conversation during the interludes. She realized that her suspicions were fully confirmed, that her uncle's apparently disinterested proffer of aid to Holland had been really a bribe, and that Hugh's refusal to accept it had only, in some hapless way, made him more easily the victim of Finlaison's scurrilous attack. The whirl of her thoughts for the moment overlooked the fact that Holland must have ignored her note of warning, and she could remember only Mr. Callander's part in the transaction. Her cheek reddened at the thought that her father's brother would permit his lieutenants to soil an honest man's name.

From her position of vantage in the back of the box she quietly studied the sleek complacency of Finlaison. He had a smooth, round face, with a mouth and eyes not unlike the slits in a Hallowe'en pumpkin, and his hair was getting very scanty on top. He was an old young man, with an air which he fondly believed was worldly and astute, and a distinct inclination to double chins. His eyes were of so uncertain a tint, and so inclined to play hide and seek in the slits between the heavy lids, that Betty had observed him for some time before she was aware

that he was covertly watching her. She flushed with indignation and returned to the perusal of her programme, apparently absorbed in its printed pages and determined to ignore the rest of the world.

When the performance was at an end, the whole party went to supper at the Callanders'. It was after one o'clock, therefore, when Betty found herself alone in the west drawing-room with Finlaison. The others of the party were laughing and talking in the hall before their departure, and he had come back to the drawing-room at Betty's signal. He sauntered toward her, his hands in his pockets and his smile, which always seemed so much too thin for his fat face, hovering about his thin lips like a ghost of merriment. Unconsciously, Betty drew herself up. She had the sensitive perceptions which instinctively recoil from moral turpitude, and there was always something in Finlaison's presence which suggested the slippery depravity of an eel.

"Mr. Finlaison," she said coldly, "I'm going to ask a question—and I want you to answer it too."

He smiled still more. "My dear Miss Callander, have I ever hesitated to answer your questions?" he asked gallantly.

"I was told to-night," she began, and then swiftly changed the sentence—"I have just heard that you are charging Mr. Holland with accepting a bribe from the Illinois Traction Company. Is it true?"

"Of course it's true," he replied suavely. "He has; I saw the check, Miss Callander."

Betty's face colored deeply. "You misunderstood me," she said. "I asked only if *you* said that he had accepted the bribe?"

"I did, of course," he replied, smiling still more; if she did care for this young man from Missouri, now was his—Finlaison's—opportunity to crush out her tenderness, and he meant to do it. "I said it because it's a fact, Miss Callander. I tell you I saw the check."

"It's false—and you know it!"

At bay, she stood looking at him with flashing eyes, her cheeks crimson.

Finlaison did not immediately reply; he was an adroit man, and he was thinking deeply. He no longer doubted her feeling toward Holland, and considered shrewdly the various ways of breaking it.

"I'll have to refer you to your uncle, Miss Callander," he said, smiling a thinner smile than ever. "He'll set you straight."

"Mr. Finlaison, I was in the library the day you told my uncle what you intended to do with the check that Mr. Holland had torn in two," Betty said, her breath coming short and her eyes sparkling. "The door was ajar and I heard that much, and told Uncle Eli that I had heard it. I know that Mr. Holland had torn the check, because—because I heard you say that you could *piece it together*."

Finlaison looked at her a moment and then laughed. It was a rare

event for him to laugh; in fact, he had never laughed with real enjoyment since he had lost two front teeth at the early age of ten, when a playmate chastised him for telling a cowardly falsehood. "Miss Callander," he said blandly, "it was your uncle who tore that check in two."

Betty felt for a moment that her heart had stopped beating; her mind was too keen to lose sight of the situation for an instant, and she realized at once that, though this was probably an enormous falsehood, she had no means of refuting it, and she could not even be sure that Holland had. She experienced a horrible sensation of losing her grasp on the universe and floating off into open space, with the dizzy plunge of nightmare, and involuntarily caught at the back of a chair and leaned on it, white to the lips. Finlaison watched her steadily.

"I know that my uncle did not destroy that check," she said at last, "for he never wrote a check which he would destroy later. Uncle Eli knows his own mind."

"You can ask him," Finlaison said, with an air of candor. "He'll tell you the truth."

"I do not need to ask him," she returned haughtily; she did not wish to add that she would not believe him. "I know all about that check, and I know that Mr. Holland would n't take it."

"My dear Miss Callander"—Finlaison took his hands out of his pockets and came nearer to her, trying not to observe that she immediately recoiled—"I'm mighty sorry to shake your confidence in a friend, but it's true all the same. Of course your uncle destroyed the check we've been talking about, but that was n't the check that Holland took. *How could it be?*"

She saw his point with a feeling of terror. How could she escape from this network of falsehood? She could only fall back on a woman's argument of unbelief. "It is n't so, Mr. Finlaison; I don't believe it."

"Come, now, Miss Callander," he said persuasively, "how can you? Do you mean to say that I'd tell you a falsehood?"

"I do not mean to say anything except that I don't believe that Mr. Holland accepted a bribe from any one," she replied.

"Very well, then, I'll surrender," Finlaison rejoined promptly. "If you say the moon's black, I'll say so too, and if you say it's purple, I'm willing to swear to it. Miss Callander, you know how I feel about you!"

She gave him a quick glance of disdain. "I spoke of this to-night only because I wished to silence slander," she said haughtily; "not to force any one's opinion. I think now we'll go back to the others. I must bid Mrs. Innes good-night."

As she spoke she moved gracefully toward the door, but he intercepted her, standing doggedly in her way.

"Do you think you're treating me quite fairly?" he said. "You're asking me to drop this accusation against Holland for your sake, and then you snub me. You know well enough how I feel about you. I'm willing to do what you wish, but I want a square deal. If I'm your slave, to do your bidding, I've a right to some consideration. You make this appeal to me—and you know I love you!"

Betty's eyes sparkled again with indignation. "Appeal?" she repeated. "Is it an appeal to demand the truth? I did n't mean to trespass upon your forbearance. I meant"—her breath came quickly—"I meant to warn you!"

Finlaison's thin smile dawned slowly across the white wrath of his face. "I might warn *you*," he said significantly, "against quarrelling with me. I don't believe your uncle would."

A shuddering perception of impending evil illumined her mind. She regarded him with a look of horror. To her he seemed the veriest toad, and he perceived it in her glance and raged in secret.

"I'm going," she said, with forced calm. "I have never had but one thing to say to you, Mr. Finlaison, and I've said it! If you have any power over my uncle, I can't help it, but I will surely warn him against you. Good-night!"

But he would not be silenced.

"Wait a moment, Miss Callander," he said, in a low voice, his eyes very narrow. "I think you owe me a fair hearing—I've stood your friend, you know. Do you think your uncle would like it if I told him that you were calling on Holland that snowy evening?"

Betty stood looking at him in amazement. For a moment she could not realize the extent of his insulting cowardice, then her face flamed. "Stand aside," she said haughtily. "I wish to go through that door."

"But you must hear me first——" he began.

"Not a word!" she cried passionately. "Not a word! I despise you!" and she left him standing by the door alone.

VI.

"So you've got to go right back to Missouri, Holland?" Lawrence Innes said, as the two walked up-town together late that night. "You certainly make flying visits."

"Have to," Holland replied. "I've got cases in court, and I've got business here getting evidence about one of the cases. I'm on the train pretty often."

"Kitty's complaining because you don't stay long enough to dine."

"Mrs. Innes is most kind," Holland said, "but I really have n't time for these formal dinners; I have to do my eating in a primitive and gobbling fashion, between engagements."

Lawrence was silent for a moment and they threaded their way

across an avenue where traffic was almost congested by a broken-down automobile. Once free of the throng again, Innes turned to his companion. "Have you seen Miss Callander?" he asked carelessly.

"No." Holland pursued his way, his eyes upon the long vista before him, where the white electric lights cut out clean shadows, and now and then the arch of some vividly variegated lettering appeared above shop or restaurant.

Lawrence Innes said no more, and they were both silent for a while; then Holland spoke. "You were right in warning me away from Callander," he said, with an effort. "I had no business in his house; I was a silly fool to go there. I went, too, of course to see Miss Callander, but she could not wish to see me under the present conditions."

"Why do you think that?" the other man asked quickly.

"I should think the conditions were apparent; she must know how I feel toward her uncle now," Holland replied quietly. "He and Finlaison have been accusing me of accepting bribes, and an unavoidable delay in bringing up those cases against their companies, a delay that they counted on, has lent color to their charges. And—well, I wrote her explaining my abrupt departure, and she has never answered my letter."

Innes frowned thoughtfully. "I can't quite understand her doing a thing like that; it is n't in the least like her," he said.

"Except that she had a right to do it. I can't explain to you the curious tangle of her uncle's affairs with mine. Politics are fine to break friendships; I'll never be welcome there again," he concluded.

Lawrence held out his hand. "We are all indignant at that bribery charge, and the consequent hounding in the yellow journals. Of course every decent man who knows you knows it is mere blackmail. I'm sorry too," he added, "for I know how old a friendship it is."

Hugh wrung his hand. "I suppose that such charges are part of a politician's life," he said, "and I thank you all the more for your belief in me."

"The belief will soon be universal," Lawrence said as they parted.

Holland, going on his way, found that, as usual, it lay past the big house on the corner. He looked at it earnestly, regretfully, with a lingering and unconfessed hope, but it gave no sign. The long line of brilliantly lighted windows showed no beautiful shadow upon them, no mental telegraphy conveyed to him the struggle of that other mind. He went on, therefore, without even dreaming that Betty was trying to thrust him out of her heart forever, even while she was defending him. At that very moment she was hearing the charges against him, and denying them. In simple justice, she told herself. Yet she passed a sleepless night, and the next morning went feverishly in search of those recent papers which she had missed.

There was a pile of them in the library, and she scanned sheet after sheet until her eye caught the headlines about Missouri politics, then she found the long and somewhat vivid article, which had lost nothing in transmission. It painted the young district attorney in strong colors as a hypocrite who had spent much time in pretending to unmask fraud and corruption, and was now the recipient of enormous bribes in the very cases that he had brought against two great trust companies, and declared that, as a matter of fact, he had merely been levying blackmail on the corporations, and deserved no consideration from the people, whom he had betrayed into a belief in his charges.

Betty read the article through with indignation. She saw Finlaison in every line of it, and Finlaison's thin smile of triumph. For her life she could not have told why the man inspired her with such creeping terror and revulsion. It seemed as if class distinctions, which were strong in her, were enough to inspire only contempt, yet she dreaded him, dreaded that mysterious and indefinable hold which he seemed to have upon them. And behind him was her uncle! He must have inspired this attack upon Hugh—that seemed to her too patent to be doubted. It was small wonder that Holland avoided the house and avoided her. He must look upon them as his worst enemies, for here was an attack upon him that would be only too difficult to defeat, a calumny that deserved only contempt and yet would command attention, and was injurious enough to put him in a bad light before the country. Who had made it so prominent, too, in the New York papers unless it was Eli Callander? She knew only too well that he had constant dealings with newspaper men and often elaborately entertained them. Could he have even inspired the venom of this article? Or was it altogether Finlaison? Betty sat staring at it with fascinated interest; it seemed to her a perfectly constructed piece of villany and worthy of Finlaison, yet she remembered, with a shudder, the shrewd mastery of Eli's face—and he had been kind to her. From the past she easily conjured up a hundred things that spoke of his kindness and forbearance to his brother's child, the pensioner on his bounty, for Betty had no fortune of her own, but spread her wings like a butterfly in the golden sunshine of her uncle's millions.

She read the article through twice, and every word of it seemed to burn into her brain. She remembered, too, Bobby Durand's comments, and divined the comments of others everywhere, who did not know Holland, and must and would judge him unheard. Aside from every other consideration, her strong sense of justice prevailed. She detested the attack for its injustice, besides its cruelty.

Then she remembered Holland's silence, his avoidance of the house. Was it possible that she had given her heart unsought? Betty stood up suddenly and flung the papers away. What was it all to her?

She was still standing there when her aunt came in, fresh from lunching with a newly made fashionable acquaintance, and redundantly decorated with jewels and feathers and lace, as the finishing touches to a cerise satin gown that contrasted diabolically with her streaked auburn hair. She came in slowly, drawing off her long white gloves and revealing a pair of arms as withered and sinewy as the drumsticks of an ancient hen-turkey.

"It's fearfully cold to-day," she remarked, "and there was something the matter with their furnace. We nearly froze. But it was quite an elegant lunch, Betty; we had a gold plate course."

"Yes?" said Betty absently. "Did you eat it?" and her eyes strayed toward the offending paper.

Something in her tone or her attitude arrested Mrs. Callander's attention, and she eyed her sharply. "Betty," she said, "what is the matter with you? You're not yourself, and I heard you quarrelling with Mr. Callander the other day."

"No, I'm not myself," said Betty, holding out the newspaper. "I've been reading that article, and I know that Finlaison wrote it, or caused it to be written, and yet you tolerate Finlaison—you even take him about with us. Aunt Callista, he's a snake."

"He's Eli's business man," Mrs. Callander said indignantly, "and that should be enough for you. As for that article, I've read it, and I believe every word of it."

"I don't," said Betty quietly. "It's not true."

"What in the world does a girl like you know about such things?" the older woman protested. "I would n't know myself without Eli's statements. I'm surprised at the way you speak of his affairs. I can tell you, Betty Callander, you owe everything to him. I'm going to tell you the truth now—he's always said I should n't, but I will! I can see you need it, you're too uppish, but you're not to let him know I told you! You're not his niece; you're no relation in the world—you're just an orphan he picked up and befriended, and you're turning on him now like an ungrateful little—little adder!" Mrs. Callander was lost for an appropriate expression.

"Not his niece?" Betty was transfixed. "I don't understand."

"You shall!" said Mrs. Callander, flushed with excitement and the joy of telling a long and irksomely kept secret. "Your father was simply a bankrupt—he would have been turned into the street if it had n't been for Mr. Callander, who'd known him from a boy and was sorry for him. They'd worked their way up together, too. One night out in Nevada, when your father was lost up at the old Esperanto mine—he was always fooling about mines—it snowed three days. Eli went for him, found him, wrapped him up in his own coat, and carried him down the mountain, miles and miles. His feet were nearly frozen

doing it—that's the reason he's so lame at times. Then your father went out and shot himself—in a drunken fit, I suppose; he was a drinking man—and Eli took you. I protested; I did n't want the care; but he would do it. He took you in, a penniless, ragged little girl, and he's treated you like a daughter. You have n't a shadow of claim upon him. Your real name is Betty Stair, John Stair was your father, and your mother was a Miss Benton. I will say I think you're very ungrateful to speak up about his doings. If I were you I'd go down on my knees and thank him."

Betty had listened to this long harangue with a face that turned from red to white. It was entirely new to her, yet she could not doubt its truth, for the very vehemence and simplicity of Mrs. Callander's expression and delivery carried immediate conviction. And she was conscious of a thrill of relief that she was not of old Eli's blood. It seemed as if a shackle had fallen from her. Yet she realized, with a sudden sweep of conviction, her complete dependence upon the man whom she had judged; that her rebellion against him must have made her seem merely a poor ingrate. Betty's clear mind took measure of the situation at once. She felt herself suddenly impaled on the sharp point of indebtedness. She owed everything to Callander, he had treated her like a daughter, and gratitude, common decency—if no other consideration told—must seal her lips; but her mind reeled under the shock of the revelation. She could express neither surprise nor repentance; she stood quite still and looked before her with unseeing eyes.

Mrs. Callander, not usually keen in her perceptions, was still aware of the immense effect of her information; it gave her something of the same kind of satisfaction that a small boy feels after lodging a torpedo successfully on the car track. She gathered up her white gloves and a sheet or two of the fashion sections of the papers in preparation for her ascent to her own rooms. "I hope," she remarked pointedly, "that you now see how badly you appear when you talk so of Mr. Callander and Mr. Callander's friends. Mind, though, you're to keep on calling him your uncle; it's his wish. Besides, I've told you all this without his knowledge. You understand?"

"Thank you, Mrs. Callander, I understand," replied Betty bitterly but obediently; "only—only, don't speak to me of Finlaison."

"I care nothing about Finlaison," Mrs. Callander said more calmly, "except that he's useful to Mr. Callander, and that should also be sufficient for you, and if Mr. Callander wants you to marry Finlaison—well, I would advise you to do it!" and with this announcement she sailed, rather than walked, out of the room, for the abundance of her draperies, and their flopping propensities, gave her the appearance of a ship with too much canvas on.

Left alone, Betty sank into the nearest chair bewildered, and sat there gazing into space. Not Eli's niece, not shadowed by his evil doing, nor uplifted by his grandeur! It was incredible. She felt as if some sudden earthquake shock had swept the ground from beneath her feet. Then she thought, dimly and brokenly at first, of her own father and mother, whom she had never remembered. A wave of loneliness swept over her, yet with it was relief: she was not of his blood, but the debt—was not the debt of gratitude more binding? She shuddered, covering her face with her hands. A shadow, grisly and portentous, seemed to fall across her life; the shadow, perhaps, of the magnate of Paradise.

Meanwhile, Dr. Chester was calling upon Eli Callander. The doctor had come on again from Missouri to investigate a famous case in one of the Baltimore hospitals, and happened over later to play a rubber with Eli. But he found Mr. Callander huddled over the fire with an attack of lumbago, though outside the spring warmth was in the air.

"I suppose you did n't take my remedies," the doctor remarked bluntly, after looking the old man over with a quizzical eye. "You look about as sociable as a hermit crab in a lobster-basket."

"It's that derved lumbago," Eli grunted.

"Of course it is," twinkled Dr. Chester. "Put on your plaster and behave like a human being. The last attack you had ought to have taught you a lesson. Is this worse or better?"

"It's no better for talking about it!" his host snapped.

The doctor giggled. "You're just the same as you were sixty-five years ago, Eli. I'm blamed if I believe you're a day older! You need a good licking, the same as we used to get in school."

Eli grunted, his chin sinking lower on his chest. He did not even display any interest in the rubbishy pack of cards that Dr. Chester hunted up and produced suggestively. The old doctor eyed him, his head on one side, his small, bright eyes keen as a sparrow's. He ran the pack through his fingers, but Callander took no notice.

"We're having a hot time down in our town for midwinter," he said at last. "Young Holland's got things going. There's something doing!"

"I should think there might be," Eli remarked, looking up from under his shaggy brows. "There's been enough about his accepting bribes; he's got to put up a fight."

"Oh, no one believed that!" Dr. Chester said. "We're not so green. But he's going to show it all up, he says, and he's going to win that case for Miss Harriet Hopper. We're all sure of that."

"Well, you need n't be!" grunted Eli. "He's a crowing cockerel, that's all."

"Not much! You don't know him. Besides, he's after Finlaison, and let me tell you no one likes Finlaison. You'd better cut loose from him yourself."

"Cut loose from him!" Eli's face blazed with sudden anger, the hands that gripped the arms of his chair trembled. "Cut loose from him!" he howled. "Who said I was bound to him? Who said it—d'ye hear?"

The other old man regarded him with mild amazement and answered nothing.

"Who says it?" Callander screamed, half rising, his face livid. "Who says I'm bound to Finlaison? It's—it's——" He faltered and sat down, doubled up with a twinge of his enemy. "It's a lie!"

"Eli," said Dr. Chester calmly, "don't you get so excited; you'll have apoplexy. Besides, no one said you were bound to Finlaison, unless you did yourself."

Callander stared at him blankly, something terrible in the unguarded rage and bewilderment on his rugged face. For the first time in his life Dr. Chester felt that he had seen him frightened. But frightened by what? He fell to considering it while Eli slowly regained his self-control, though his fingers trembled visibly and clutched the arms of his chair with a kind of futile eagerness.

"I'll tell you what, Eli," his old friend went on serenely. "I wouldn't trust Jimmy Finlaison. You're very right not to be bound up with him in any enterprise."

Callander leaned forward and peered at him, his brows down, his own master again, though he was ashen gray. "Why?" he asked tersely.

"Because Jimmy's a sneak."

The cavernous eyes opposite fastened on the old doctor and seemed to burrow a long way into his consciousness. "What've you heard of him lately? What are you driving at, William?"

The doctor shut his mouth tight for a moment, and tapped with a thoughtful forefinger on the pack of cards he had held all the while. "Not much, Eli, but there's a saying in the country that when it's going to rain a pig will run around with a straw in his mouth. Jimmy has been running around with the straw ever since the Hopper case got into court. I reckon he thinks it will rain right smart down his way when he's called in to testify about that surveying of the Little Neck Meadow land. My Lord! Eli Callander, he robbed that woman!"

"I don't believe it; it can't be proved."

"It has been proved. Hugh Holland's got him cornered. Just before I left," the doctor continued, "there was a lot of talk about Finlaison having offered to compromise, to give the deal away to get off scot free."

"Lies, all of it!" Eli cried, but his hands had begun to tremble again.

"Not a bit of it," Dr. Chester chirped, watching the shaking hands and marvelling much. "He's badly caught, he's frightened, and he's a sneak."

Eli took out his handkerchief and mopped his forehead, as if he felt the heat of the low burning fire. "Who's he got to betray?" he muttered, glaring angrily at the doctor. "Who's he got to betray? Tell me that!"

His visitor frowned. "Why, Eli, you're going off again. Let it alone. Who cares any way? Let Finlaison hang."

"I don't care a cuss about Finlaison," Eli shouted, "but I want you to know that there is n't anybody he can betray!"

"Lord! Eli, I'm not deaf!" said the doctor amiably. "S'pose we play a rubber."

Old Callander bit his withered lip, writhing in his chair with anger and sudden pain. Then he reached out impatiently but mechanically to cut for the deal.

VII.

It was late in May when Lawrence Innes, on his way to California, stopped at Little Paradise. He had expected Holland to meet him at the hotel, but as he did not, Innes went in search of him. Rumors of him were everywhere, for the week before he had entered suit for slander against Callander and Finlaison, charging them with falsely accusing him of accepting bribes, and causing the publication, over the country, of implications against him. The boldness of this attack, which carried the war into the enemy's territory, and publicly accused the magnate and his henchman, took away the breath of Paradise. Men stood aghast, yet relished it in secret, as such a piece of news is relished in the little centres of gossip, from one town's end to the other. Hugh's name was on every lip, yet no one could answer for his whereabouts, and Lawrence, failing to find him either at his own lodgings or at his cousin's house, finally made his way to his office. It was after ten o'clock, and he was surprised to see a light burning in the little upper room where Hugh had worked for ten years of bitter struggle, checkered with successes and defeats.

Innes ascended the bare stairs and, crossing the hall, sought the crack of light under the door at the farther end. He knocked, Holland's voice answered, and he opened the door and walked in. A shaded student's lamp was burning on a table littered with papers, and the open desk was covered with typewritten sheets. But the young lawyer himself sat idle in his chair by the table, his head in his hands. He looked up as Lawrence entered, but his whole attitude suggested

something which was almost despair, and Innes saw the haggard pallor of his face as he raised it.

"Good heavens, Holland!" he exclaimed involuntarily, "what is the matter?"

"Everything," Holland replied, rising to greet him. "The mine has exploded, and I'm sitting in the ruins."

"What the deuce do you mean? You can't be talking about those scurrilous attacks upon you. I've heard nothing but your praises. They told me at the hotel that you got a judgment for Miss Hopper this morning, and that Finlaison is in a tight place."

"Ah!" exclaimed Hugh bitterly. "There you have it! That rogue—that damnable, cowardly rogue! If I could only pin him down! But he slips through my fingers, he has covered himself by exposing others, and he still holds the winning card, or thinks he does; his resources are amazing. Lawrence, you remember Hal Andrews—he used to be Leslie's lieutenant—and Jimmy McFinn, the sheriff here under Leslie?"

Innes nodded, taking the chair that his host had pushed toward him.

"They came here this morning. Lord! I've had my bad quarter of an hour! Do you see those papers?"—he pointed to a bundle tied with red tape. "There's the evidence, enough of it to break both the Illinois Traction and the Interstate Pure Food. It's the whole story of that gigantic lobby, of the corruption of the legislature and the bribing of individuals. They say it was all laid before Kalyph, but he committed suicide and nothing was done. They did n't even get back their papers; these are all new affidavits, fresh evidence. Kalyph was an honest man, and why he killed himself God only knows. It was inexplicable. Just at the time when he was most needed too, and knew it. But the case is all opened again."

"I don't seem to remember all the details about Kalyph," Innes said slowly. "Was it certain that he shot himself?"

Hugh strummed on his desk. "I don't believe Dr. Chester thought so," he replied finally. "It happened in the private office of the Illinois Traction. Kalyph was found on the floor in his own office, with the weapon beside him. They called in a surgeon who was passing at the time, and he and the coroner had both been there before Chester saw the body. The old doctor was off on his forty-mile circuit. The verdict was suicide. There was no one really to accuse in connection with it, and the district attorney—it was Adams then—seemed disposed to hush it up. It turns out now that Kalyph had these papers and others that they cannot find, but there's enough here. It's all here, in fact. McFinn said to me, 'Holland, you can beat the ring and whip the Governor and Callander at one lick!' I told him my busi-

ness was n't political, that I was here to do my duty under the law. You should have seen their grins of incredulity! It's not possible for such men to believe in any man's honesty, or that there's any motive in the world except the lowest one of self-interest. They sat there where you are and poured out a story that might have shamed the biggest scoundrel in Sing Sing, and not one of them turned an eyelash!" He rose as he spoke and began to walk to and fro across the dingy little room.

"Hold on a minute!" Innes exclaimed excitedly. "You say you can smash both these great companies. Then, you've got evidence to squash all that rotten accusation of bribery against you?"

Holland nodded. "Do I not bring suit? That's more than enough, and there's something else besides." He stopped in front of Lawrence, and the light from the shaded lamp exaggerated the hollows in his thin face. "I've got evidence there that convicts Nickers and his gang, but, mark you, he's turned state's evidence, the confounded scoundrel! It's another man who must bear the brunt of it. You know who's behind Illinois Traction?"

"Have you got Finlaison at last?"

Hugh shook his head impatiently. "Not yet—he's too clever. He's the greater scoundrel, in my belief, but he's got power yet; he's to be dealt with separately. There's another—think!"

Innes started. "You mean Eli Callander?"

"I mean Eli Callander. Larry, if I live a week longer I've got to indict him."

His listener stared at him in speechless astonishment.

"I've got to get the indictment," Holland went on, more correctly.

"Callander's a lawbreaker. The proofs are clear enough; I've got letters there, telegrams, cancelled notes, even some receipts. Finlaison kept everything, to save his own skin, no doubt, and McFinn and Andrews have been on the old man's track like the bloodhounds that they are. Finlaison has handed out a little and a little, just enough to keep them running; he's got more up his sleeve, what it is I can't make out, but something that would clench it, and he's holding it to keep his power over the poor old wretch. I suppose Callander did n't pay them heavily enough for some of their dirty work," he added scornfully. "At any rate, I've got to bring him before the Grand Jury, and if I do—my God! Larry, he'll go to the penitentiary."

"Good heavens! Holland, what a complication! It's poetic justice. He's been trying to ruin you, and now he's in the hollow of your hand!"

"There! That's what they think, all of them, that I'm actuated by political spite, that I strike home blows for myself. Good Lord! Larry, I thought you knew me better!"

"I do. But it's there, the most perfect vengeance man ever had! He's been slandering you, endeavoring in every way to blast your career, and his ruin is in your hands."

Holland swung around on him with a white face. "Do you know how I feel? I fancy not. I got those papers a few hours ago, and ever since the rogues left me I've been here alone fighting the devil of temptation. I've walked this floor, and it pursues me—pursues me so that I cannot cry out even, 'Get thee behind me!' God! Innes, don't you know I've got it all there in that bundle? And a match struck, the empty hearth, and a few gray ashes—and I'd be out of this hell of temptation and despair! Good heavens! perhaps it was a like case which made Kalyph shoot himself!"

Lawrence stared; then the whole situation forced itself upon his reluctant mind, and he too lost color. "You mean——"

"That I'd burn them if I could, if I dared to face my own conscience afterwards!" Holland began to walk to and fro again, his hands clenched. There was a moment of intense silence. "Don't you see how it is?" he said at last. "The man is old, broken in health—so Dr. Chester tells me—and he's always held a high place in the world's esteem; he is to-day almost the foremost man from this State in finance. And I—I must hurl him down, ruin him, blast his career at its close, and plunge his family into misery."

Lawrence leaned his head on his hand; his own attitude much that of Holland when he had discovered him.

"And to every human being it will look like my revenge," Hugh went on, "the paltry attack of a struggling attorney on the established order of things, the malice of failure against success—that will be the verdict of the world."

"The verdict of the enemy," Lawrence said. "Nevertheless, your duty is plain enough."

"My duty—always my duty! Let duty go hang!" cried Holland bitterly.

"I think you've hung yourself a good many times for it, Hugh," his friend remarked dryly.

"Too many times! Now, for once, I'm tempted to play the rogue, too, to fling their dirty papers into the fire! Let them bear their own sins without stripping away the covering from another's. If a man had leave to hang every coward that he met, and rope enough to bind the world, it would n't be long enough to hang the half of them!"

Innes sat staring thoughtfully at the floor, his face troubled. "Yet you've cause enough to hate old Callander," he said, "to rejoice in his downfall."

"Well, I don't," said Hugh. "I've seen the thing coming for months—since February—and here it is, and I've got to face it."

Nothing in the world but his death could let me off, and he's not likely to die."

Lawrence shook his head. "I fancy not. These old men of the last generation are like leather. He's complaining all the while, but playing cards and doing his business just as usual, so Miss Callander tells me."

At her name Hugh turned with a muttered groan and flung himself into his chair again. Innes glanced at him quietly, keenly, comprehendingly, and the concern in his own face deepened. He saw at last an illuminating ray upon the situation. "Did you know that they were coming? They'll be here to-night or to-morrow."

Holland shook his head. "I did not know; there has n't been a word between any of us for months. Frankly, Larry, Mr. Callander tried to bribe me in February. I know it, he knows it, and if I commence this attack it will be, in his eyes, my revenge."

"He's a bold man," Lawrence said musingly. "I thought him shrewd enough to take the measure of a man more thoroughly."

"My dear fellow, you've never been poor," the young lawyer said bitterly. "When you are, men commonly suppose you to be corruptible. If, in the ethics of the world, every man has his price, they assume that the poor man's is low. I've seen enough roguery, in my short service here, to sicken me. Yet, mark you the anachronism, I'm unwilling to pull down the rogue!"

"They told me something about those lands of Miss Hopper's. I don't quite understand the whole suit."

"It's involved enough to puzzle a Dutchman. I've got her Little Neck Meadow lands back, and the money that was due her on the other. She got her house back, too. Finlaison cheated her in the survey of the boundaries, where the land ran parallel with Callander's, and here again old Eli was behind him, and Finlaison is sly enough to find that loophole and damage Eli by his testimony. He's wriggled out there, too. Callander held the mortgage on her house and foreclosed it; he, and not Finlaison, conceived that whole miserable, cruel scheme to push an old woman to the wall so as to compel her to sell valuable lands below the normal price." As he spoke, Holland's expression was deeply absorbed, and he swung his chair around and unconsciously fingered that package of papers. Their presence on his desk seemed almost like the presence of an animated and vindictive personality.

Lawrence watched him, leaning slightly forward into the circle of the lamp-light, his calmer face deeply interested. In the pause they heard the door below open and close, and a step on the stair. Both men listened, and heard the tap of a cane.

"It's old Dr. Chester," Holland said wearily. "He comes by

this way at night, and if my light is burning stops for a whiskey and soda."

"He was to have come down with Callander. They must have followed me on the nine fifteen. I thought they were n't coming until to-morrow. What has brought him out here, I wonder?" Lawrence added, glancing anxiously across at Hugh.

But his face was in the shadow and his visitor could make nothing of it. "Fate, I fear," he said laconically.

Then the door opened and old Dr. Chester looked in. "Hello, Lawrence, you here? Well, boys, can you take in on old fellow like me?"

"Glad to see you back, doctor," Holland replied, pushing forward his own revolving-chair. "You've come for a whiskey before bedtime, I fancy."

"No, no!" The old doctor held up his hand, an almost imperceptible turn of his eyes including Innes in his thought. "I've sworn off to-night, Hugh—had some liquor at the Callanders'. They came home with me on the nine fifteen."

Holland said nothing, but drew forward another chair for himself, and offered the doctor a pipe.

There was a long pause, and the little old man looked from one to the other. "Did you hear what I said, you young beggars?" he asked at last. "Or have you lost your tongues just because an old foggy like me breaks in on you?"

Innes laughed. "My dear doctor, you're always the soul of good cheer. I knew already that the Callanders were here."

"Oh, you did, did you?"—the doctor sniffed. "You both look as if I had said something dreadful, or committed murder and arson. They're back, the whole kit of them. Betty as lovely as ever, the old lady in satin and black beads—she rattles—and the old gentleman pretty bad off, pretty bad off, and as cross as a rattler in a blackberry patch."

Hugh still made no reply. His eyes were fixed on the bundle of papers tied with red tape, and his tormented mind dwelt on the picture of Betty in the library, leaning on the mantel, her flushed face turned upon him and her soft voice saying over and over, "He has been kind to me." The inexorable fate that had thrust upon him the hard condition of being the one to strike the blow that must hurt her so keenly, seemed to be also thrusting upon him every refinement of torture that the situation afforded. He was likely to know all the details of the household from Dr. Chester and be made thus, by proxy, an unwilling witness of the torture that he must soon inflict.

Happily for him, Lawrence Innes, seeing something of the conditions that prevailed, threw himself into the breach and picked up

the threads of the old man's talk. "What is the matter with him?" he inquired carelessly. "Last time I saw him he was doubled up with lumbago externally, and seemed to be doubled up internally with ill temper, or something else."

"Dyspepsia," said Dr. Chester placidly. "When a man can't digest his food he's liable to commit murder, or run off and get married. Eli's been married some time, so he's dangerous. However, we'll keep weapons away from him."

Lawrence smiled a little grimly. "You seem to think that love and dyspepsia are synonymous," he observed.

"They are at Eli's age," cackled the little old man, resting his hands on the top of his cane and peering curiously at Holland. "Hugh, they tell me Harriet's got her case and her money. I'm going around there to throw up my hat."

"She has won, yes," Holland assented quietly, "and she's happy in her gentle, frightened way. She's like a child with a new toy, bless her kind heart!"

"And you're the toy, I reckon," retorted Dr. Chester. "She'll leave you her property, my boy, and she ought to."

"I hope she won't, and that she'll live forever."

"Amen to the last," responded the doctor. "At least, as long as I do, Hugh, for she always takes my pills. I can't say that of everybody! What did you do to Jimmy Finlaison?"

As he spoke the old man turned with that quick motion of the head, so like a watchful sparrow, that seemed to bring both young men in the range of his vision. Holland, leaning in his chair, looked haggard.

"I wrung the truth out, Dr. Chester," he said reluctantly. "I suppose you read the newspaper reports of his cross-examination. He told me as much of the truth as a liar can, then he slipped off on a technicality and shifted the blame. He's like an eel with the hook in him: he runs under a rock and breaks the line."

The doctor nodded. "Yes, but there's more behind it. Whom will you indict?"

Holland's frown deepened. "The Grand Jury will settle that," he said simply.

"Ah, I see there is more behind it. You're getting on your legal face."

The young lawyer laughed in spite of himself. "Have I, then, two faces?"

"Yep," said the doctor mildly; "but I have n't seen you swallowing widows' houses yet."

"Hugh's mission seems to run the other way," Innes said, smiling. "He's been restoring one old lady's property."

"Humph!" said Dr. Chester. "Every young lawyer has an axe to grind. Hugh's going to be Governor some time, and he's got his eye on the main chance. But I've got something to ask, and I'm going to ask it."

Innes rose. "Perhaps I'd better go," he suggested pleasantly, "if you want to talk with Holland."

"Pshaw!" said the little old man, motioning him back to his seat. "It's no secret; I want to get at something else. Hugh, is Jimmy Finlaison acting for Callander—or is he Callander's boss?"

Holland looked at him in silence for a long moment, then he leaned forward and put the bundle of papers in the drawer of his desk. "I'm not prepared to say, Dr. Chester," he replied at last.

"Shucks!" said the doctor bluntly. "You mean you won't. Look here, Hugh Holland, I believe that man Finlaison has outstripped old Eli and got the handle of the business, and if he has—if he has"—the old man leaned forward on his cane, the lamp-light playing strongly on his shrewd, withered, kindly old face—"by heavens! he'll ruin them all, for old Eli can't stand much, he's got the mark on him, the time clock's set, he's going to die before a great while. Remember that, Mr. Attorney, remember that—before you strike."

As he spoke he rose, gripping his cane, and reached for his hat, which he had laid on the table. "You young men are hard judges," he added, holding out his hand to Hugh, "hard judges, but you've all got to be judged, eh?"

Holland's face was ashen. "God knows I remember it!" he said. "But a man must do his duty."

"Just so," said the doctor, making for the door. "So did Lucifer—before he fell. Good-night, boys. It's near twelve and I'm an early bird."

VIII.

THE prosecuting attorney walked the floor until daylight. In honesty he must take Eli Callander before the Grand Jury, and if he did he would ruin him. Not only ruin him, but—if Dr. Chester was correct in his diagnosis—also, probably, be the cause of his death. Yet even that troubled him less than the thought of Betty. Through the long dusky hours before dawn she haunted him, a beautiful and charming presence, whose happiness he must imperil, if he did not quite destroy it. He was haunted, too, with that other aspect of the case, the one that had presented itself to Lawrence Innes. If ever a man had the means of revenge thrust into his hand, he had it now. For the last four months Callander's attitude toward him had been one of persecution: he had defeated every effort that the younger man had made toward success, and Holland had felt his inimical influence in everything, he had lost ground everywhere, and had had to fight

step by step. His poverty, too, had ground him. He had been unable to prevent a foreclosure on some old property of his father's, which Callander's influence had forced into the market. He had been forced to stand by and lose it, thus being stripped of any little capital he had left. It had been bitter, the inexorable, hopeless battle of the rich against the poor, the pushing to the wall at the supreme moment, the exacting of the pound of flesh if the money be delayed even six days by hard necessity. Holland had suffered all this and more at Eli's hand, and now vengeance—vengeance so full and terrible that it was appalling—was thrust upon him. Yet there was no triumph in the moment—only a complete and wholesome revulsion of feeling; and he was possessed by a temptation to destroy the papers, so malicious and so poignant that it tortured him.

As day broke he went to his window and, throwing wide the shutters, looked out. The building where he had his office was situated in the older part of the town, down by the court-house, but across the square, between the city hall and the jail, he could catch a glimpse of the wide streets, converging at last into the distance. The land was flat, and there was no gracious outline of hills here, but at the end of the long vista he seemed to see the rim of the world, just bound with gold, like the lip of a costly cup, and the purple haze of the distant sky was shot through with quivering drops of light, the soft clouds drifting above the dawn illumined with a light and beauty and rosiness that seemed to diffuse itself gradually over earth and sky. Below, the streets were still; in the warm spring morning not a leaf stirred, and suddenly he thought of the roses that must be blooming in the trellis under Betty Callander's window, the window on the east side of the old house. The house where he used to visit as a boy, but which must be closed to him now forever. A thousand memories crowded back, arresting the present struggle of his mind and diffusing thought itself with the rosier, more tender aspect of those sweet far days, when they were children together and she quarrelled with him. They had seemed to grow apart with the intervening years. She had been sent away to fashionable schools, to Europe for the finishing touches of her education, and finally she had bloomed out into a young woman of fashion. Their childhood had slipped away, the old relations lost in new formalities, and that moment in the library in the Washington house had been the only one for years when she had touched upon the past.

But even more bitter than the inevitable separation was this new necessity. To her, doubtless, he would seem as her worst enemy, since it must be his hand that would deal the blow, his deliberate act which must expose her uncle as a rich conspirator, a criminal monopolist; and worse than all was the too patent interpretation, the

interpretation that had showed itself so vividly to McFinn and Andrews, and even to Innes. He would be said to be reaping his own revenge, triumphing in the defeat of his personal enemy. That he was merely doing his duty, and doing it with regret, was not conceivable to any mind but his own. Yet there his duty lay in those closely type-written sheets, bound with the official red tape, and freighted with ruin for one man at least.

He left the window, where he had stood idly watching the blush of morning diffuse itself into the blinding rush of sunrise, and went to his desk to turn the key upon a temptation that again plucked at his elbow with the insistence of forty devils instead of one. The irony of that fate which tempted him to save his enemy had never seemed so poignant as at that moment; Eli wanted to despoil him, to rush him into obscurity, yet he was anxious to avert the impending ruin which would render the old man forever harmless.

He had been so lost in thought, so wrapped up in contending emotions, that he had taken no heed of the passage of time, but was aware at last that the streets had come to life, and the sounds of early traffic floated up to his open windows. He caught the shrill cries of the newsboys and the rumble of heavy produce-wagons on their way to market. It was not his custom to stay all night in the office, and he was suddenly apprised of the fact that he had been fasting since noon the day before by perceiving the aroma of his neighbor's coffee. He roused himself, therefore, and went back to his lodgings for a bath and his breakfast, and an hour and a half later, when he returned, felt more prepared to battle with the hard facts of another day.

He went up to his office and began to arrange his work, first closing the shutter toward the east to shade the full glare of the hot spring day. As he sorted out his letters and hunted up a few important notes, he was aware of the fresh green tree-tops that were level with the window-sill, and noticed the perfume of wistaria. The old vine that climbed a neighboring portico was in full bloom, the heavy purple clusters hanging over the upper balustrade. Court convened at eleven o'clock, and he had prepared the opening address for the prosecution. He was turning over the loose pages of it when his quick ear caught a light step on the stair, and the next moment some one tapped at the door of his outer room. Both doors stood open; without looking up, he called out to his visitor to come in. He heard some one enter the other room and stop almost at the threshold. Surprised at this unusual hesitation, he turned sharply and saw a slender figure in fresh white, with a rose-trimmed hat, standing in the outer office.

"Will you come in?" he said formally.

The girl turned and their eyes met. He uttered an exclamation and went to meet her. "Miss Callander!"

She blushed to the temples. "Yes," she said softly; "it is I. Mr. Holland, may I speak to you for five minutes?"

"Five minutes?" he cried. "No one knows how glad I am to see you."

He could not be conventional; he gave her a chair, but his face was as white as hers was rosy. "It is four months since I have seen you," he said, "and it seems four years."

"You never came back," she said, with a little wavering laugh; "you never even answered my letter."

"Your letter? I never received any," he replied, in amazement.

"I—I took it to the Chetworth myself!" she said.

"I never got it, and I wrote you—did n't you know that I never got it by my letter?"

"I never got your letter."

They stood looking at each other. A burning blush spread over her face. She divined the fate of his letter; old Eli must have got it and destroyed it. The thought was like the annoying sting of some pestilential insect. How small it all was! She felt herself suddenly a prisoner. But her letter to him? Then she remembered Finlaison—could he have got it from the servant? "We seem to be the victims of circumstances," she said. "I am sorry. But—but you *might* have supposed that I did n't receive yours."

He made no reply, but his glance was eloquent. He was thinking of her and of the package of papers in the desk, and the confusion of his thought made him tongue-tied. He was face to face with temptation again.

Misinterpreting him, she felt his silence and half turned away, her pride struggling with an intolerable emotion. Her lips quivered, suddenly she hid her face in her hands. "Why do you make it so hard?" she cried.

He was the more deeply moved of the two. "Betty," he said, "Betty! Don't you know that your coming here is like a special providence to me? I was starving for the sight of you, the sound of your voice."

But she did not raise her head. He went to her then and, bending over her, laid one hand gently on her arm. She was to him something very sacred and beautiful. "Betty," he said, "I love you with all my soul, but I thought you did not care for me, that you did n't want the love of a man your uncle hated. I took your silence to mean that, and more than that! In many ways I am a miserable failure."

She looked up then. "You are a success," she said hurriedly; "it is your victory; you are honest—oh, don't you see? It was that I wanted—that! When you told me about Adams and Leslie, I knew they were trying to bribe you, and I wanted you to stand the test!"

They looked into each other's eyes long and steadily, and a great light broke over his strong face. He forgot the documents. "I've been a blind fool," he said, "a blind fool! Betty, I——"

She drew back, her face crimson, a flash almost of anger in her eyes. "Oh, what have I done?" she exclaimed. "I came here to beg a favor, and it seems as if I came for this! You must despise me!"

"You do not think I misunderstand?" he answered quickly. "I know you came for your uncle, with no thought in your generous heart but for him, but you forget that I am human, that I can't crush life itself to think about—your uncle! Remember what the months have been to me, their blankness, and now"—he caught her in his arms—"Betty, I can't give you up again!"

For a moment she was swept away by the strength of his emotion and her own. She clung to him, only conscious that she loved him, that she was but a chip in the great torrent of life, whirled by the tide of it. It was an instant of wild happiness; then she forced herself to think, she struggled and he released her.

"Betty," he said, "you must hear me——"

"Hush!" she cried sharply, fighting hard to keep her own courage up, to remember her obligations. "Don't say it—answer me instead. Hugh, are you going to attack Eli Callander?"

The light died suddenly out of his face.

She drew a long breath and stood leaning on the high back of a chair. "I knew it," she said. "I knew it! I heard enough from Dr. Chester to piece it together, and they told me of those two men coming to you yesterday. Hugh"—she left the chair again and came toward him, the charm and graciousness of her personality keenly accentuated by the dingy background of his office—"Hugh, tell me how bad it is. Tell me."

He turned away sharply; it was too much to tell her now, to raise fresh barriers between them. "I wish he were not your uncle!" he said with a groan.

"Is it as bad as that?" she murmured.

He was silent; it was so much worse than that!

"Hugh," she said softly, "with all his faults, he's stood in a father's place to me. He was kind to my father when he was a bankrupt; but for him I would be penniless—I can't forget! But there is something else. I am bound not to tell this, but to you I must. I am not his niece, I am not of his own blood, only a poor orphan whom he took in and cared for because my father was his friend. It is his compassion that has made me what I am. I am nothing to him, yet I owe him everything."

"Thank God that you are not his niece!" Hugh exclaimed with fervor. "Betty, that's best of all!"

"I know it," she whispered. "I know it! I felt that way, too, but it only makes my debt the greater."

"I can't see it so," Holland interposed. "He was kind, and have you not returned it? You have been all a daughter could have been to him. You are quits."

"No, no!" she said. "Don't tempt me. I will not forget what he did for my father, what he has done for me. I must not forget it! I know it all; I've seen and heard too much lately to be blind; even Kitty Innes has been cold to me; but I can't help what the world thinks. I must plead for him. He does n't see things in your way; he has n't the instinct that we have. Money means much to him; he has come to think it a god, that it does n't corrupt. If you strike at him now and—and ruin him, Hugh, he's old, he is n't well, his heart——"

He put out his hand sharply, with a passionate gesture. "Don't!" he exclaimed. "Don't! I must tell you the truth, Betty. He is guilty—so guilty that if I do not have him indicted I am a dishonest man. There are the papers"—he went to his desk and brought them to show to her. "They will ruin him. Don't think I have n't been tempted—no, no, not by anger, Betty, but to destroy them."

She looked at them eagerly and held out her hand, almost the perversity of a child showed in her wilful, lovely face. "Oh!" she cried passionately. "Give them to me!"

Holland sighed. A great wave of passion and despair swept over him. What did it matter? What did anything matter? Her love was worth more than that, yet it was the price of his honor. Every trained instinct of the lawyer, every inherited impulse in the man, resisted. He was inherently honest, yet temptation could assail him even when, in the lucidity of his thought, such moments were contemptible. He turned the packet over in his hands, aware that they were unsteady. "It is here," he said, in a quiet voice. "You can take it, Betty, but if you do, if I do not bring in this testimony, I'm a dishonest man; I am what Callander and Finlaison would have made me in the eyes of the world. You must ruin me to save him."

Again she covered her face with her hands. "Take it away, Hugh!" she cried. "I see what I have done. I have tempted you to do wrong—and after I have prayed for you to do right! It is like a woman! But if you do it—if you do it—we must part forever, Hugh. I——"

His face hardened into strong lines, the light in his eyes grew steadfast. Looking at him, she thought him, for the first time, handsome. He turned to her quite simply. "I have loved you," he said gravely. "I have loved you a long time. I shall always love you. If I have hoped for anything in the world, it has been to make you my wife. I

cannot withdraw from this indictment, as matters stand now, but I can resign."

She drew her breath sharply, looking at him in wonder. "Is it possible," she whispered, with intense agitation, "that you can surrender that? It means so much to a man, Hugh——" She broke off with a sob.

He smiled. The struggle was over so far as he was concerned. "You mean more to me, Betty," he said, and he held out his hands, his face illumined. "Betty," he repeated softly, "I have always loved you."

She was weeping. "It is I who would ruin you!" she murmured. "I! And oh, Hugh——"

"You are more to me than all the world," he said.

But she would not listen to him. "I can be noble, too," she cried. "I cannot let you do it. It must go on as if I did n't exist;" and she turned to the door.

"It can't go on in that way," he replied. "I can't let it go on so, Betty. I will resign. I will not lift up my voice against him for your sake, but I cannot dishonor my office. It is easy to give it up."

"You are not honest now, Hugh Holland," she said passionately, "and you know it! It is n't easy to give it up, and it is I who must give you up."

"Betty!" he said sharply, but she was gone.

He ran out after her bareheaded, but saw the Callander carriage driving rapidly away.

He went up-stairs to his desk and put the papers in his pocket again. Then he wrote a note to the Governor who hated him. "Lord!" he thought. "How glad he'll be."

It was almost whimsical, so many hated him for his unsparing honesty, and he was dodging the responsibility of his office. It would not save Callander, but his would not be the hand to pull him down. He had given it all up, and he threw himself down on his lounge at last and slept in his clothes, the first sleep for forty-eight hours.

IX.

WHEN the Callander carriage left the dingy old street where Hugh's office stood, it passed quickly across the market-place and turned toward the Callander house, which stood almost in the centre of the town. Old Court-House Lane used to run straight up to the big, round, white gate-posts with the bronze eagles on them, but later they called it Callander Avenue. After the exposure, however, it got to be just Court Street, and it is so now. Betty could remember when it was a lane with flowers blooming in the hedge-rows, but the house had been partly altered even then. It was big and square and ugly, with a

wide front piazza and two portentous bronze lions on either side, lions that she had played with as a child, and that stared at her now with unseeing bronze eyes.

Eli had altered the old place with an eye to his personal aggrandizement, and he had the first brownstone steps and balustrade in town, while his long row of windows were all enlarged and fashioned over until the front looked like a fashionable club-house, and suggested to the townspeople the mysterious flavor of "a Washington season." Something as vague and nebulous to them as a mirage, Betty thought with a sad smile, as she glanced at the front windows, as the carriage approached, and at the trim lawn dotted with gaudy flower-beds.

Getting out of the carriage in front of the bronze lions, Betty avoided the hideous parterres and walked down into the untouched old grounds behind the house, to the summer-house, that, facing south, was out of range of Eli's windows. Under that old arch Betty had fought many a battle with herself; and there once, long ago, she remembered it now, she and Hugh had played marbles on the old worn floor, when the air was sweet with mignonette, and there were no keener anxieties than those which related to the quarrels that they had over their games. Even now she remembered the day when she got his agates and he was so grown up he laughed at her. It had made her tingle with anger. How she had hated him for that laugh! To-day, when the thought of him was bitter-sweet, she wished, with tears in her eyes, that she hated him still. How foolish it seemed to think of those old days now! Yet the tears came. She had gone to Holland in the supreme moment of her pity for old Eli, her desire to prove, even to herself, that she was not so ungrateful as Mrs. Callander supposed. It seemed to her that the very fact that she was an orphan pensioner upon his bounty bound her to do her utmost for him. But it had never entered her mind that by doing so she would thrust a hard necessity upon Hugh of either refusing to listen to her entreaties, or of violating his own sense of honor and duty. She had left him, therefore, overwhelmed alike by the consciousness of his love and her own mistaken course, and his determination to resign plunged her into the agonies of self-reproach. Her love for Hugh, and her pride in him, had never been more profound, and yet she had asked him to give up all for her sake! The turn that events had taken seemed inexplicable. Every time she struggled to clear her mind and look the crisis in the face, she was overwhelmed by its cross purposes. They loved each other, and must they give each other up because of Eli Callander? Hard necessity. Yet had he not helped her father and fed and clothed and housed her, and treated her as his own child, for years? The debt was there, and its poignant sting reached her very heart.

She stood with her hand on the rustic door-post, looking out with unseeing eyes, when a sudden shadow fell across the sunlit path and she looked up to meet Finlaison's eyes. Her start of angry surprise seemed almost to please him. His sleek face was unruffled, and he smiled.

"I thought you 'd be here," he said calmly. "I saw you come, and I've got to know a little of your ways."

"My ways are of no possible consequence, Mr. Finlaison," Betty said haughtily.

He faced her, his hands thrust deep into his pockets, and a smile under his drooping lids. "Miss Betty, I sometimes think that no one else's ways count with me," he replied, "and that, too, in spite of the way you've treated me!"

Betty made no reply. Instead she looked steadily over his head, her breast heaving with suppressed emotion. The reptile had some power over Eli Callander, she had felt it from the first, and now a keen perception of a change in him made her heart beat in her throat. He no longer had the air of a suppliant. There was instead encroachment, power, determination, in the smooth composure of his face. His very manner was an affront.

There was a long silence, then he spoke.

"Betty——" he began.

"Sir"—she turned on him like a beautiful young fury, her eyes sparkling—"to you I am *Miss Callander*."

"Oh, are you?"—he was white with anger. "Perhaps you won't stay so," he added bitterly, "but I'll let it go. It don't count much—your name. I mean to make you take mine!"

Betty came down the steps of the summer-house, but he blocked her path.

"Let me pass, sir," she said furiously. "If you do not, I will call for help!"

"I think you won't," said Finlaison, and something in the steady glitter of his eyes held her, as a snake holds a bird.

She stood quivering; her splendid beauty seemed to pulsate with passion and pride. The man, in spite of his anger, gazed at her in fierce admiration. He would tame her. By God! he thought, what a magnificent creature to own!

"I came down here to tell you so again," he said.

Betty looked at him, and if a look could have killed he would have shrivelled in his tracks. "Will you let me pass?" she demanded haughtily.

"No!"

She measured him from head to foot, her lip quivering with anger, not with fear. "Mr. Finlaison," she said in a low, clear

voice, "I have despised you many times, but until now I never thought you a ruffian."

"Until you made me one," he replied, with the first real flash of passion. "Until you made me one. You've despised me, yes, and treated me like a worm and refused to speak to me, but my day's been coming slowly but surely. It's come, Miss Callander!" He stopped, panting, and Betty gazed at him in sudden panic. Was the man mad? But he went on headlong, the words rushing from his lips in a torrent, the pent-up passion of his heart breaking out, as though the sluice-gates were open at last. "You're going to marry me," he said, "and that soon. I loved you, and you treated me like a dog. Then I swore to get you, and I will, by God! You'll marry me and not that young shyster over yonder"—he pointed with a quivering finger toward Hugh's office. "Not him, though I know you're over-fond of him, and not over-scrupulous about visiting him alone. You'll marry me—if I'm willing to take you——"

"If you say another word," said Betty wildly, "I think that I shall kill you with my bare hands!"

"No, you will not kill me; you'll marry me, and be right glad to do it, too," he said, between his teeth, "when you know what I can tell you."

"I will not listen to another word!" she cried passionately, and tried to pass him, but he caught her by the arm and attempted to hold her.

"How dare you?" she said, wrenching herself free. "How dare you?"

"You've got to hear me," he replied doggedly. "I'll have you anyhow. No one else will want you, my lady. Your uncle is a ruined man!"

"I know it!" said Betty. "Let me pass, you—you villain! It is you who have ruined him."

"Hold on!" said Finlaison. "You think you know it, but you don't; nor does your lover. *I can hang your uncle*. He's a murderer."

Betty gasped. But for the doorpost, she would have fallen. She did not doubt him for a moment; conviction carried in every word. This, *this*, was the terrible thing he held over Eli's head; this was the secret of that power that she had never fathomed! She thanked God that Eli Callander was not her uncle, but she kept that secret still, if it was a secret from this sly dark man. She shuddered, and he saw it. A slow triumph dawned in his eyes; he felt himself irresistible.

"They thought President Kalyph of the Illinois Traction shot himself," he said deliberately. "He did n't. Your uncle shot him and killed him in his private office when he threatened to expose the very steal that McFinn and Andrews are exposing now to Holland.

I'm the only man on God's earth who knows the truth of the death of Kalyph, and all the planning that led up to it. If you refuse to marry me, you won't get one penny of the estate, and you'll tie the rope around old Eli's neck so"—he made a grim, significant gesture—"just as sure as if you'd hanged him."

For a while Betty made no answer. She stood looking at him instead, and the contempt and loathing in her clear eyes burned him. He clenched and unclenched his hands, and once he had to wipe the foam off the lip he was gnawing. She affected him with madness. He could have wrung her pretty, slender throat, if only to bring her to her knees to cry for mercy.

When she spoke at last her voice was clear and there was a new note in it, a note that should have warned him that there are lengths to which not even self-sacrifice will go.

"You say that you are the only living witness to a murder," she said. "Are you sure, then, that you are not also an accessory?"

He laughed mockingly, though the sweat stood out in beads on his forehead. "Sure," he replied. "I saw it and could not prevent it—I can prove that. I only held my tongue in pity for an old man—an old man to whom you owe everything."

Betty recoiled; had she not pleaded with almost these words, certainly with these thoughts, to Holland? Must it be ground into her soul—the inexorable debt of her life?

"I could have hung him first hand," Finlaison went on, "but he grovelled, and I spared him. He's grovelling still. To be tried for Kalyph's murder is the one thing on earth he can't face. He'd give you to me this minute if he could."

"He knows you are here?" Betty asked, her brows drawn and her white face strangely illuminated. It seemed as if every emotion were crystallized; as if the passion and shame and anger had made her face a mask of alabaster behind which every contending emotion was fused in a still white flame.

"He knows I'm here," Finlaison said, "and he says you'll marry me. I reckon you haven't got much choice, *Miss Callander*."

"And if I marry you?" she said slowly, watching him again, as she would have watched a snake.

"Well, he won't hang, and maybe I can keep him out of jail. Besides, I can save some money for you by holding my tongue."

"And the money—all this"—Betty comprehended the place with a graceful gesture that seemed to make her tall slenderness more beautiful—"you think it is worth saving? That I should do well to save it by marrying you?"

"I reckon so," said Finlaison, "and so do you!"

"I would rather starve," said Betty. "I would starve in the

gutter rather than accept a crumb from your hand—or from his, after this.”

He broke out then with an oath, stung beyond endurance. “You ’ll marry me,” he said, “or I ’ll hang old Eli.”

“And what if I do not believe that you can hang him?” she said. “What if I believe that you would have done it, if you could, before now?”

“Ask him!” said Finlaison, pointing a shaking finger at the house. “Ask him!”

“I will,” she said. “But what if even this fails, if not even for my benefactor’s sake am I willing to sell myself to you? What if—and it is true, heaven knows!—I would rather throw myself into the river than touch your hand?”

Finlaison wiped the foam from his lip again; his eyes were deadly. “Even then,” he said, “you marry me, if I choose to marry you, and you ’ll be glad to; for if you refuse, if you taunt me again, I ’ll make your name ring. I ’ll tell the world what I believe—that you ’ve been too often to visit Hugh Holland’s rooms.”

With a sudden movement Betty sprang from the step and, evading him, swept out on to the lawn. Then she turned and faced him. “You cur!” she said. “How—how dare you?”

Finlaison pointed again at the house. “Go ask him,” he said. “Go and ask him; then you ’ll marry me.”

She looked at him one long moment in a silence that was terrible even to Finlaison. Then she raised her chin a little, that attitude of hers that seemed at once beautiful and disdainful. Outwardly she was calm, though the rise and fall of her shoulders betrayed her. “Mr. Finlaison,” she said sharply, “you will follow me to Mr. Callander.”

She turned and walked across the lawn. Finlaison’s gnawed lip bled a little, but he followed her.

She walked up the veranda steps ahead of him, carrying her head high, and left the door open for him to follow into the house, but she neither looked back nor spoke. She was going to the magnate’s private office, but she heard his voice and Mrs. Callander’s in the library, and turned aside.

The old man, huddled in a great chair, was clothed in a flowered dressing-gown, his drawn face so gray and pinched by contrast that it looked like a clam-shell on the edge of a flowerbed. As Betty walked in, followed by Finlaison, Eli looked up from under shaggy brows and fixed them with an enigmatical stare. Mrs. Callander, who had been talking to him, was plainly frightened.

Betty came across the room and stood over the old man, a tall young figure buoyant with passion. “Uncle Eli, is it true that you are in this man’s power?” she demanded, pointing at Finlaison.

Eli dropped his head lower, still looking out at them with fierce eyes. His mouth worked, he said nothing.

"Is it true," Betty went on, "that you have offered *me* as the price of his silence?"

"Betty!" cried Mrs. Callander, in a shaking voice. "Betty, you are scandalous! Think of your uncle's health! Think—think of what I told you!"

"I have a right to know," said Betty, unmoved.

"Been asking her to marry you, Finlaison?" demanded Eli at last.

Finlaison laughed, but the laugh was discordant. "Yes," he replied, "and stated a few interesting facts, just to strengthen my cause."

"Humph!" said Eli. "You always were a fool."

The fire in Betty's glance burned deeper. "Mr. Callander," she said, "do you know of what your henchman accuses you? He calls you, behind your back, thief and murderer."

Mrs. Callander gave a shrill scream and collapsed, a crumpled heap of beaded satin, into the nearest chair, and lay there, unnoticed, like a pricked balloon.

Old Eli, glaring at Finlaison, mumbled, his hands gripping the arms of his chair. He swore profoundly. "You're a cool one," he said to his lieutenant. "I did n't know that was on the cards."

"I told you I should use it," Finlaison replied coolly, "if it was needed to make the situation clear to her. She's flouted me once too often for her own good and yours!"

"By gad! sir," said Eli, with uncontrollable passion, "you're a sneak!"

Betty stood between them, looking from one to the other. "It is n't true, then, Uncle Eli?" she said, with sudden softening. "It can't be true! Send this wretch out of the house! He has been at the bottom of it all, I know. I heard him plan that charge about the check against Hugh Holland, that is being publicly refuted, to your disgrace; and now this creature told me that you had stolen so much money in the Illinois Traction that when President Kalyph called you to his private office and confronted you with your theft you murdered him in cold blood; that he had evidence, and if I did not marry him he'd use it to your ruin. I know there is evidence against you already, but not this—it *can't* be this! Send him away!"

Mrs. Callander got up suddenly and ran to her husband with shaking hands. All her trivial splendor had shrivelled and fallen from her like a dead leaf from a stricken bough. "Eli," she sobbed, "Eli, is it true? Is this what you've all been whispering about? Oh, my God!" cried the poor woman, falling upon her knees beside Betty. "It's true, it's true, I see it in his face! Betty, save us!" and she

clutched at the folds of Betty's dress with trembling fingers, in an ecstasy of terror. "He must be saved!" she wailed. "He must be saved! I'll die if this disgrace comes! You have n't any right to refuse; you're ours, ours—just as much as this table or this chair. We took you in, we fed and clothed and housed you!" Then she broke out in loud, hysterical weeping. "Betty, save us!"

"Shut up!" said Eli violently.

The girl scarcely noticed her. She was searching the magnate's face, and the guilt she saw there, the cowering admission, struck terror to her soul. This, then, was what he feared! Was it possible the grim old man could be so broken? Whatever evidence Hugh had, it did not mean this murder, yet he too had enough to ruin Eli, and it was plain that he was hiding a kind of terror that, being so grim and so foreign to his nature, was all the more terrible in those slight outward evidences that not even his iron will could suppress. Here was a man who had been a master, grim and cruel and inexorable, and he was mastered at last by the secret knowledge of this cringing coward. Her glance swept past him to Finlaison, and horror, keen physical repulsion, tore away the last shreds of illusion. To save her benefactor from a shameful death she was asked to degrade her womanhood by such a marriage. There stood the greater knave, the man who had so far evaded justice, who would evade it still, by his wit and his wickedness and his growing wealth; a sleek, cruel figure of success, the toad with the jewel in its head.

"Mr. Callander," she said in a low voice, "are these things true?"

Old Eli gripped the arms of his chair; his brows were down, his deep eyes burned. He stared full into Betty's young tense face, and eye to eye they measured strength. "I did it!" he said. "Kalyph taunted me; he had the papers that they say are to go to Holland, curse him! He can't have all of 'em, but that man"—he pointed a rigid finger at Finlaison—"that man has: he saw Kalyph's death. Hush, you whining woman!" he added to his wife, who was cowering on the floor. "For five years I've paid him, I've crawled on my nose to his feet, like a whipped cur, and now look at him, Betty. He wants you, you're his price, he's always wanted you! If you take him, he'll keep still and I'll get off. If you don't"—he touched his own throat. "Take your choice, miss. You owe me something, I'm blessed if I don't believe you're the only one that does! Save me or hang me. Stay here or"—this time he pointed at the door—"or go!"

Betty pressed her hands over her eyes, bewildered. "It's all true!" she cried with conviction. "It's no nightmare!"

Old Eli was exasperated beyond endurance. "It's none of your business anyhow!" he said fiercely. "You marry Finlaison and show your gratitude—or you go!"

Finlaison touched his lips nervously with his hand. "I told her," he said in his smooth voice, "that she had compromised herself with Holland, that people were talking, but I was generous enough to overlook her thoughtlessness."

Mrs. Callander struggled up from her knees. "Betty, I forgot that!" she wailed. "You've got to marry this man, if he'll have you. I never dreamed you'd do anything scandalous. People will talk. You can't refuse to save your uncle's reputation."

Betty stood looking from one to the other. "Do you believe the vile things this man says?" she demanded.

Eli scowled. "You'll find the world believes 'em!" he snarled.

"I should like to ask you where you were this morning?" Finlaison said.

Betty looked at him a moment in profound scorn. "In Mr. Holland's office," she said proudly. "Is there anything more?"

"I should calculate that that was a pretty good-sized admission," Finlaison said to Eli. "Did n't I tell you so?"

"The girl's a fool," said Eli. "Betty," he added abruptly, "you'll marry this man and hold your tongue."

"I fancy Holland would n't marry you—not after he's got some of his evidence against your folks," said Finlaison, with cutting irony. "I reckon his love won't hold. See here, my lady, there are one or two more things to tell Holland: I can ruin and hang your uncle here, and I can drag you and your lover into publicity. The price of my silence? It's you," he said with fierce passion. "*You!*"

Betty wrenched herself free from Mrs. Callander's frantic hands. "I'll never pay it!" she said. "*Never.* You cowardly hound, if Hugh Holland were here he would kill you!"

Mrs. Callander turned to her husband, wringing her hands. "Eli," she sobbed, "can she save us?"

Eli bent forward in his chair, his face like iron again; the habit of command is hard to break. "She marries Finlaison or she leaves," he said. "I've heard enough of her goings-on with Holland."

Betty swung around. "Then you believe what this wretch says?"

"You'll marry him," said Eli.

She walked past him to the door. "I'll never marry him," she replied, "never, and I thank God I'm not your niece!" and she went out.

Finlaison followed her into the hall. "You understand," he asked, "the consequences?"

Betty turned on him, quivering from head to foot. "Go back!" she commanded. "Don't dare to follow me, don't dare to touch me, you—you toad!"

He turned livid. "Is that your answer?" he said in a low voice.

She shuddered. "I can't do it!" she cried. "I loathe you! I could n't do it to save my very soul!" and she ran from him blindly, as if he were indeed a walking pestilence.

He watched her, hatred and revenge in his sullen, cruel eyes.

In the library Mrs. Callander was in hysterics. Eli stared at her.

"You fool, you!" he remarked comfortingly. "You went and told her. I've got no hold on her now. Scream away! By gad! I'd like to wring your fool neck!"

X.

As soon as Betty left his office in the morning, Hugh Holland had sent his resignation to the Governor, and that unfriendly official had published it at once.

The news, placarded on the bulletin-boards, ran like wild-fire, and in an hour both Great and Little Paradise were aware of two facts: that the young commonwealth attorney had resigned, and that he had won his suit for slander against Finlaison and Callander. It had been proved in open court that neither of them could produce any accepted and receipted check made out to Holland; the charges of corruption were not only false, but might easily be the foundation of another suit charging conspiracy.

The town was agog. The partisans of Callander were many, for wealth, like honey, draws flies; but Holland was not without his champions, and there was a veiled triumph on the side of those who were struggling to defeat the Governor, for it had been found that whatever hurt Callander hurt Leslie too, although the latter was making gallant efforts to withdraw from the entangling skeins of the magnate's fortunes. All these things kindled the excitement. Crowds hung around the bulletin-boards, and more were gathering to hear Holland speak for the opposition candidate. He was still determined to defeat Leslie. It was the last blow that he could deal an administration which was to profit so solidly by his withdrawal from the ranks of its active enemies.

The old town-hall was crowded that night. It was a square brick building, facing northeast, with a bricked quadrangle separating it from the jail. It had been the scene of many famous trials: here Colonel Blathwayt had been sentenced for the murder of Calderwood, here the sentries had paced before prison walls to keep out the mob, here old Judge Ladd had handed down equal if choleric justice, and here, of late years, Callander had won suit after suit until Hugh Holland stripped bare the methods of the ring, and won his few hard victories, as he had faced here, too, his bitter defeats.

With the gathering of dusk the town-hall filled and overflowed into the quadrangle of the jail. The unshuttered windows blazed with light,

and men could be seen sitting on the sills. Some of the more venturesome climbed up from below and found precarious roosting-places on the coping which ran below the east windows, yet even there they would be out of range of the speaker's voice and could catch only the receding ripples of excitement which were sure to rise and fall, wave on wave, like the ebb and flow of the tide.

Doctor Chester and Lawrence Innes met at the corner and walked together toward the building.

"Looks like a storm centre, does n't it?" Lawrence remarked. "It was splendid the way Hugh won out on the bribery charges. They cheered him as he came out of court. I wanted to hear him speak to-night, but that looks like a hopeless proposition. They're fairly on the window-sills."

"Mostly are when he speaks," Dr. Chester grunted, "and the people are plumb crazy over this resignation. They want to know what it means."

Lawrence knocked the ashes out of his cigar. "I fancy they never will, doctor," he said musingly.

Dr. Chester gave him one of his quick, keen looks. "I reckon you know," he remarked dryly.

"I? Not at all," Lawrence replied quickly.

"Humph!" grunted the doctor. "You can put two and two together, though, I fancy."

Lawrence laughed. "Don't drive it home, doctor," he said.

Dr. Chester thumped his cane on the pavement. "I know," he said. "It's something to do with Callander, and I reckon if he'd had any notion that Callander was quarrelling with Betty he would n't have resigned."

Lawrence smiled in the darkness. "Would you?" he asked.

Dr. Chester made no immediate reply; instead they walked on in silence, his cane tapping as usual. Then he broke out abruptly. "Lord!" he said. "What can one do to a dying man?"

As he spoke, a tumult of sound rose ahead of them; it seemed as if a tempest had broken loose in the lighted building and the gusts of it were tearing their way through space. The crowd in front reeled and rocked.

"What the devil?" exclaimed the doctor.

"It must be an unusual speech," said Lawrence.

"They're not speaking yet," growled the old man, holding up his cane. "*Hark!*"

The uproar fell a little, then a keen voice was heard shouting an order and the crowd broke to let out runners.

"Something has gone wrong!" said Lawrence and started forward.

Dr. Chester stood still, listening; a man was running toward them.

"What is it?" Lawrence shouted.

"Doctor wanted!" gasped the messenger. "Hugh Holland's shot!"

"My God!" cried Lawrence.

Dr. Chester said nothing; he was going to the scene of the disturbance as fast as he could, scarcely using his cane. Lawrence caught hold of the man, who was reeling, his hand at his side.

"Who did it?"

"Finlaison!" The man turned back with Lawrence. "They've got him. I reckon mebbe they'll lynch him. They think Holland's dying."

Both were running now.

"What was it?" gasped Lawrence.

"Dunno," said the other. "I was outside and got the message and scooted. They were 'phoning, but I—I thought"—he lost his breath and got it again—"mebbe I'd find one——"

They reached the outer rim of the crowd and pushed through it. Then Lawrence fought his way. They had cleared a path for Dr. Chester, and in some way Innes pressed along in his wake, but it was thick again outside the room where they had carried Holland. Dr. Chester went in, but it closed on the others.

Outside, half a dozen men whom Innes did not know were whispering, while in the other crowded rooms a storm was brewing, and beyond the old brick walls the crowd was held in leash only by the fact that Hugh's life apparently trembled in the balance. Lawrence heard a man beside him whispering to his neighbor.

"They'll lynch Finlaison," he said. "They've got him in the basement, with two constables on guard, but they can't get him out of the building without a company of militia."

"They say Leslie's telephoned for it to the barracks."

"Humph! Leslie would just as lief hang Finlaison."

"I thought they were thick."

"So they were, but they say Finlaison's peached."

"He's rotten any way."

"Too bad about Miss Callander."

"Yep, her name's out now."

Lawrence turned away. The wildest surmises flashed through his mind, but none touched the truth, and why Betty's name should be dragged in was beyond his conjecture. There was a hush outside now. People waited, and Lawrence heard the gong of the hospital ambulance. There was a stir, and four white-coated internes came bringing in a stretcher. Then the inner door opened and Dr. Chester saw Lawrence and signalled to him. Two or three men drew back and let Innes pass.

In the room were only Dr. Chester, the four internes, and McFinn. The young men were lifting Holland from the table to the stretcher. Lawrence went over to help hold it. No one spoke, and Hugh seemed to be unconscious. Five minutes later they were carrying him out, and Dr. Chester picked up his hat and cane.

"Is it dangerous?" Innes asked quickly.

Chester nodded, his face was white. "Left side," he said shortly, "mighty close to the heart. There's a fighting chance."

"Thank God!" said Lawrence devoutly, and they followed the stretcher on its slow progress to the van.

The crowd parted and walled up on either side, but there was a motion, a suppressed passion that seemed to thrill it until it wavered and throbbed like a pulse. Innes had a curious feeling that he must know how the Egyptians felt just before the Red Sea overwhelmed them. The lights from behind, on the town-hall steps, and from the ambulance in front, seemed to concentrate on the still figure and the white face on the stretcher, and as it passed a groan and murmur rose before it and ran behind, through the throng. Lawrence and Dr. Chester stood while the hospital attendants put the stretcher in the van; then the old doctor got in with it and they were gone at a gallop.

The last sound of the beating hoofs echoed in the far distance as the light from the ambulance went out in it, like a falling star.

Then followed a silence so intense in that great throng that men seemed to hear each other breathe; a silence at once fearful and portentous. McFinn was beside Innes at the edge of the crowd, and they drew away as the rest were hurled back toward the steps.

"They want to lynch Finlaison," said McFinn briefly. "Reckon they will if Leslie don't look sharp."

Some one had tried to close the big front doors when they took Hugh out, but those within had threatened them, and the full glare of light from the hall fell on the struggling, swaying masses below the steps and on them. The tumult of sound had died indeed, but the silence struck Lawrence as more awe-inspiring than any sound. There was a fierceness, a determination, that moved the mass of human beings forward like one man. They were choking the steps now, and the constables in the doorway were being pushed steadily back, like chips on the edge of a breaker.

"They mean business," remarked McFinn, unmoved. "I wonder where the devil the troops are?"

And some one climbed up on the little stone balcony over the door and held up both hands to be heard. The silence continued; it was big now with purpose, palpitant. The thin, black-coated man stood up on the edge of the balcony. A shaft of light caught his profile and outlined it with sinister strength.

"Who is it?" Lawrence whispered.

"Leslie," said McFinn. "He's smart."

They heard his voice across the square, high and penetrating.

"Gentlemen," he said, "forbear! Mr. Holland is not dead. He may not die. The issue is in God's hands, not yours. I ask you to remember that Hugh Holland stood for law and order, he stands for it still—though *he struck the first blow*."

A sudden shout tore the air. "Good for him!" and then more fearfully, deeper: "We'll hang Finlaison!"

"To-morrow," said the Governor suavely. "To-morrow—if Mr. Holland dies."

"To-night!" they yelled.

Leslie held his ground, and Lawrence began to admire the sheer pluck of the man. His face showed white in the light of the electric globe, but he did not cower. "To-morrow," he said, "if he dies—and *the law can't hold its prisoner*."

A howl of derision greeted this, and the crowd surged forward again; within was tumult, and the sound of beating upon a door.

McFinn pulled Lawrence's sleeve and pointed. Away to the right was the end of Callander Avenue, and down it came the first column of militia, the bayonets flashing vividly in the street lights as they swung around the corner at double quick.

"No lynching to-night. Didn't I tell you Leslie was a smart man?" said McFinn. "Come along, let's get out of this. They'll arrest a lot."

Innes went with him, and they walked toward the hospital. At the corner they turned. There was the sweet, clear ring of a bugle and the column charged. A tumult followed, the rush of many feet, and then the flash of bayonets again as the second column swung around the corner and closed in on the town-hall. It was over in ten minutes. They could see men running like rabbits to their warrens. Like a ribbon of steel the bayonets closed grimly across the quadrangle, and the lights went out in the old building as they cleared it.

"No nomination to-night," said McFinn grimly. "It's queer what a hold Holland's got. That young fellow has the town in his grip. Knock him out and, by gad! there's nothing doing!"

They walked on. Twenty yards farther, at the corner of Briarwood, Lawrence broke the silence.

"In heaven's name, what happened?" he asked. "I thought Holland was popular—you say he is—and at least he should have been safe."

"So most of us thought, I reckon," said McFinn thoughtfully; "but, Lord love you, man, he was in love!"

Lawrence started in the darkness; he had no desire to invite confi-

dences, and he could not imagine how this common man came to know of Hugh's love for Betty Callander. Then he remembered that her name had been mentioned in the crowd. "That is not telling me the manner of this shooting," he said dryly.

"No," said McFinn, "it ain't; but it's all of a piece. I reckon you know that Finlaison and old Callander have been altogether too thick, that's the size of it. There's a heap more that I could tell you, but I won't. You've been away from here so much that you would n't catch on *easy*. Well, it's this way. This evening a lot of us were downstairs in the fifth ward room talking. Some of the fellows had been drinking. Finlaison had—he'd been drinking steady for an hour, some of the boys said—an' when he drinks he's just as mean as blazes. He's one of those white-livered varmint that don't show it, only their thumbs get *limp*. In comes Holland, quick, tall, straight as an arrow, and walks across the room—that way he has—to ask one of the lieutenants something about the fifth ward. He was talking in a low voice, the room was kinder quiet, and I saw Finny, as we call him, lookin' at him. He hated him like the devil. Then some one spoke of old man Callander, and quick as a wink young Lew Wall—that's a nephew of Chester's—got up. The young ass was drunk, and says he, lifting his glass, 'Here's to Miss Betty Callander, the belle of the town! (Hiccup.) May her uncle die of smallpox!' I saw Hugh's head go up like a shot, but before he could say anything Finlaison threw his glass on the floor—the crash made us all jump. 'I won't drink it,' says he out loud. 'I could have married Miss Betty Callander'—he let the name out slow, slow as you pour hot wax—but I would n't, because'—Lord! it was still—'because I found that she was too intimate a friend of a gentleman present. I saw her come out of Mr. Holland's rooms in Washington alone. I——' *Jiminy!* sir, he went down like lead! Hugh got across that room and jammed him to Kingdom Come in a jiffy. When he got him down he gripped him. 'Swallow that lie,' says he, 'or, by God! I'll kill you!' I reckon we were all struck dumb, but by that time two of us sprang at Hugh to stop him. He meant to kill the brute—I wish to the Lord now he had! At that very instant, though, Finny turned over and thrust his hand into his hip pocket, there was a blinding flash, and Hugh went down in our arms. I reckon we most killed Finlaison getting the pistol from him and hammering him; most of us had a turn. Hugh was laid out on the table, they sent for the doctor, and you know the rest."

Lawrence was silent for a moment, and then he almost groaned. "There's Miss Callander to be considered—this is dreadful!"

"Yep," assented McFinn quietly. "Her name will be all over the State and the country to-morrow, but I kinder guess she won't

count that if he's spared. You see——" McFinn hesitated, then he broke out: "By heaven! sir, I know her, I've seen her—seen her a long way off, as you might say, from a girl. She's just fine and true. If she went to see Hugh, she warn't doing anything wrong, not she! Nobody that's got sand in him will believe a word Finny said, but the public—well, they do blacken a woman easy, but, Lord! if she loves Holland she's coming out right like a woman and a true one, she's all right! God bless her!"

"Amen!" said Lawrence, and held out his hand. He liked the man.

XI.

DR. CHESTER came down the broad stairs at the hospital about half past ten. He had been sent for to see a lady who would not be denied. The old man, peering over his spectacles, came into the reception-room to the left of the door. Up-stairs he had left two surgeons and a nurse with Hugh. As he came into the room a tall figure in a long gray cloak turned from the window. The shade was up, and she had been looking down into the lighted street below. It was Betty Callander. She came up and took his hand, her own like ice.

"How is he?" she breathed rather than spoke.

Dr. Chester was silent for a moment. "I think he'll live, Betty," he said. "We got the bullet, and he's coming gradually out of the influence of the opiates."

"Oh, thank God!" she said. She was trembling from head to foot, the reaction of hope broke her resolution. "Oh, thank God! Dr. Chester—he is n't conscious—may—may I see him?"

The old man took off his spectacles and polished them, but his hands shook. "Betty," he said, "do you know—about it?"

Her lips were white. "Yes," she said; "Mr. McFinn came and told Miss Harriet Hopper. I—I went to stay with her to-night."

Dr. Chester did not know what had happened, and he was a little puzzled, but he went on. "You know that Finlaison took your name in vain and Hugh throttled him?"

"I know," she replied.

"It will all be in the papers to-morrow," said the doctor. "My girl, do you know what your coming here means?"

Betty looked very tall and proud. "Dr. Chester, will it hurt Hugh—my coming?"

"Good Lord! no, child! But you—they'll talk the more——" he stopped abruptly before her eyes.

"May I see him?" she repeated simply.

The old man turned. "He won't know you, Betty," he said,

as they went up together; "but I'm going to tell you that at first he asked for you twice."

Betty said nothing. They went on. At the door of the private room where Hugh lay, the doctor bade her wait, and he went in alone. Presently—it seemed to the girl a century later—the doctors came out. Then Dr. Chester told her to go in alone. The room was lighted by a shaded electric bulb, and it was scrupulously clean and bare. There was a narrow white hospital bed, and on it the unconscious figure. Hugh's face was still as a white mask.

Betty stood looking at him. A great wave of tenderness and love swept over her. She looked at him with brooding eyes; the maternal instinct of protection which stirs in every good woman's love filled her heart. She wanted to take care of him, to watch over him, to fight death hand to hand, and she must leave him to strangers! And it was in her defense that he had received the hurt!

She knelt down and pressed her soft cheek against his hand. Dr. Chester, watching her, knew that she was praying, and he wiped his spectacles again.

The next morning the doctor found old Eli alone in his den. The sun did not shine long on the den, for the windows were east and north. It was the old man's one retreat. Inside, the Callander house was furnished as elaborately as its Washington prototype, and the gold and brocade of the drawing-rooms drove Eli as usual to his own sitting-room. He decorated his houses for the public and endured them in grim discomfort, his only refuge being in a small room which was literally littered with papers and dispatches, and furnished in ugly comfort. Here he had spent his days, while Mrs. Callander, in copper-boiler satin effects, creaked uneasily in the drawing-rooms, happily conscious in the days of their success that she had the best in town, and was the envy of her poorer but more comfortable sisters. But now, poor soul, she crouched frightened behind the door of her own room and wept.

That morning the doctor thought that Callander had never looked so old and gray. The man had shrunken; his shoulders seemed no longer wide, and his coat hung in folds between them. But his restless eyes burned under his heavy brows, and his lips worked nervously. A glass stood on the table at his elbow, and Dr. Chester took it up and coolly looked at it.

"Five fingers, Eli?" he said. "I reckon you're putting on extra ballast—more than is good for you, eh? Hope there is n't anything else in it!"

"Fiddlesticks!" said Callander, "your beastly narcotics would n't hurt a weasel. I had to take chloral last night to sleep."

"Bad," said the doctor dryly. "You'll take an overdose and then—off you go!"

"Can't sleep without something," Eli retorted fiercely. "Never had it before—this devilish sleepless fiend. What are you good for, William, if you can't make a man sleep?"

"Can't," William Chester said, smiling. "I'm not his conscience."

Eli stared at him, exasperation in every line of his strong face. "I'm hanged if I'd like you for my conscience," he exclaimed at last, with such heartiness that the other old man giggled.

"I'd be a mighty trying one just now, Eli," he replied.

"Humph!" ejaculated Eli. "I don't know why;" but there was a look in his eyes like an animal at bay.

"A mad old rat!" Dr. Chester thought. He had taken the big armchair by the east window and, putting the tips of his fingers carefully together, he sat there, apparently examining his thumbs. "Don't you know why?" he said.

"No, I don't!"

"I reckon you do know, though, that Hugh Holland was pretty nearly killed last night by your friend Finlaison."

Old Eli wriggled a little in his chair. "Well, he ain't killed, I believe," he said harshly.

"No," said Dr. Chester, "no, but it was not because Finlaison did n't try. They came mighty near lynching him on the spot."

A deep gleam burned in Eli's fierce old eyes. "Wish they had!" and he meant it.

Dr. Chester looked at him and knew it. "We won't talk about it, Eli," he said amiably. "There are things I'd like to say, though, if I may?"

Old Eli, leaning back in his chair, stared at him. "Go on!" he commanded.

Dr. Chester hesitated a moment. "Eli," he said at last, "I hope you did n't trust Jimmy Finlaison too far; I warned you once about him."

"He's a fool!" Callander grumbled. "What does he want to get into the law's clutches for? Shooting a man, too, stupid ass!"

"He's got there all the same," Dr. Chester remarked cheerfully, "and he's bound to save his skin. I went to see Holland before this happened, and I reckon I can tell which way things are going. I believe Hugh's going to live, but if he does n't, and Finlaison turns state's evidence, Eli, I trust he would n't bother you any."

Eli's lips snapped together like the blade of a new clasp-knife. He lowered his head, but his eyes never left William Chester's face. The old man felt as if they were endowed with special powers of penetration and were making holes through him. "They're just like

augers in a three-inch plank. Expect I'll feel the sawdust coming out of the holes in me soon!" he said to himself.

"He is n't out on bail yet," Eli snarled. "I tell you I'll disown him if he makes any claims on me. I've got no more use for fools than I have for skunks under my piazza—I'll tell him so, too. I believe the fellow's a raving lunatic—his mother was n't sound."

Dr. Chester laughed. "How he must love you, Eli! I wonder sometimes if you ever try to keep a friend!"

"Humph!" grunted Eli. "Never had one that didn't try to squeeze me. When you squeeze a lemon too many times you get nothing but pith. As for Finlaison—I'd like to wring his neck!" But for all his bravado the old man shook suddenly in his chair as if he had an ague.

The doctor eyed him thoughtfully. "I really believe you would!" he remarked dryly. "And perhaps it might be the safest way to keep his mouth shut."

"You can't keep an ass from braying," Eli fumed.

"I thought you could," Dr. Chester chuckled, "except when an angel stood in the way. He couldn't have taken you for one, Eli."

"I'd like to send him where he'd meet a few of 'em!" Eli snapped.

"Which kind?" chirped the doctor cheerfully.

Callander made no reply; instead he drank some of his whiskey, but made a wry face over it. "Rotten stuff," he snarled. "That villain Jenkins is drinking all the good whiskey and filling up with fire water."

"Pshaw! He would n't dare," said the doctor, sniffing at the bottle. "What ails you, Eli? This stuff is all right. Lord love you, I ought to know; my father was born in Kentucky. You've got something wrong with your stomach. Let me see your tongue."

"Tongue be darned!" said Eli, scowling at him. "You mind your business, William Chester."

"I'm minding it," the old doctor retorted good-naturedly. "It's my business to look at tongues, not to pickle them—or scorch 'em, as you suggest. I'm willing to bet a dollar, Eli, that yours is coated. You've got dyspepsia—it always makes you blue."

"I've got enough to coat my tongue!" he retorted harshly. "I tell you the town's mad, stark, staring mad!"

"Oh, no!" said Dr. Chester mildly.

"Oh, yes!" Eli defied him. "It's mad over that young popin-jay, that young idiot, and now he's shot they think he's a martyr."

His old friend thoughtfully twiddled his thumbs. "I reckon you mean Holland," he rejoined at last.

"I reckon I mean Holland," the other mocked.

"Where's Betty?" asked the doctor suddenly.

Eli eyed him, his shaggy brows down. "Gadding," he replied.

"Look here," said his visitor, "they're saying that she's up at Miss Harriet Hopper's to stay because you quarrelled with her. That does n't sound right, Eli—does n't sound like you. I'd send for Betty."

The magnate worked his dry lips; no words came.

"You see," said Dr. Chester blandly, "people love her—she's a sweet young thing—and this barbarous attack of Finlaison's has raised the town. They won't stand any fooling, and she stands for much in your favor."

"The jade went herself!" snapped Eli.

"Too bad!" said the doctor gently. "Too bad! Send for her, Eli; make your peace! As for Hugh Holland, he's doing good work; he's got back Miss Hopper's home—that was fair. Finlaison's a rogue, and I'm right sorry that your money was behind him, Eli, and more sorry because——"

"Because what?" Eli almost shouted, clutching the arms of his chair.

"Because," the other said slowly, "I'm afraid he'll betray you, if—he has n't already."

There was a dead silence, a silence fearful in its potentiality, for something like terror grew visibly in the deep eyes that glowered at the doctor. Old Eli's face was deeply flushed; the veins stood out like cords on his brow and on the hands that gripped his chair convulsively, the knuckles whitening with the force of his clutch. "What d'ye mean?" he demanded at last, his voice thick.

"I mean——" Dr. Chester leaned over and laid his hand on the other's wrist. "You sit back and be calm, Eli!" he exclaimed, dropping his other warning. "You're too excited. Tut, man, be quiet; we can bear anything we want to. Nothing kills but death."

"What did you mean?" Eli growled, still glaring at him.

"I meant that Finlaison's been telling something to get himself off, *that much I know*, and what he's told—well, maybe you know better than I do. Any way, he's been getting you into trouble or——"

"Hold on!" cried Callander fiercely. "You hold on, William Chester. Don't you know I've offered to pay the rascal's bail?"

"I reckon that would go against you," the doctor replied calmly. "Mind," he added, raising an admonishing finger, "I don't say it does."

"The devil!" ejaculated Eli, and fell back in his chair, sucking in his lip and staring at the floor.

"That was n't the person I mentioned," Dr. Chester replied

pacifically, "but I reckon Jimmy Finlaison may make his acquaintance, if he keeps on the way he's going. Thank God he won't dare worry Betty again. He's been thrashed for that."

Eli made no reply; instead he stared so persistently at one place on the floor that the old man opposite became concerned for his reason. He edged his chair nearer the table and, being there, managed to shift the tall black bottle a little further from Callander's hand. He waited patiently, but his host did not speak, and the doctor's eyes travelled anxiously from his discolored scowling face, with that fixed look upon it, about the sombre room with its book-shelves packed with packages of papers, legal documents, and reference books, and the one frowning and forbidding picture of Eli's father, terrible in its likeness to that fierce, unforgiving old man, for the son was a chip of the old block. Then the doctor looked out of the window and drew a breath of relief. The sun was still shining out there, he could see some little white butterflies careening in circles, and the long, full branch of a tulip tree swept downward just across the line of his vision.

Suddenly Callander's harsh voice broke the pause. "Can't you find out what Finlaison said?" he demanded. "What'd you come here for with insinuations and hints and all the rest of it? It's enough to drive a man to suicide. I say, can't you find out?"

Dr. Chester shook his head thoughtfully. "No, I can't," he retorted, "and you would n't expect it if you stopped to think. Don't talk about suicide—you're not Kalyph. Whatever it is, it's in the hands of the commonwealth attorney's office by this time. Besides, I know that Andrews and McFinn were with Holland before the shooting, and I reckon you know that McFinn has hated your confounded Pure Food Company. Step on a rattler's tail, Eli, and you're darned sure to get bitten. Mind, though"—the old man suddenly whirled around on him—"mind you, I'm not saying that I approve of you, for I don't. Nevertheless, I'm your friend—I've always been so, Eli Callander."

"Oh, I know it!" snarled Callander. "That's the reason you're so darned unpleasant—friends are."

"Thank you," replied the doctor mildly; "it's mighty true, to be sure."

Eli slapped his knotted hand down on his knee. "I'd give five thousand dollars—ten—d'ye hear?—to know what Finlaison said—to know it to-day. You're poorer than a church-mouse, William; go and earn it."

"Poor but honest," objected Chester calmly. "No, Eli, I can't do it. Who's to tell me? Not Finlaison—he's not going to give himself away to you; not McFinn—he's too sharp; not Andrews—he hates you like the devil, and he'd know I came from you; not Holland—

he's got no price, and he's on his back. *And what Finlaison told in the jail last night, with the fear of violent death before him, is what you want to know.*"

Eli snarled audibly: the thought of that scene in his library, and of Holland's proud refusal of his money, haunted him even now. He had longed ever since to dash him over the precipice, to see him at the bottom, rolling in the dirt of public scorn. He had, indeed, bent his best energies to the task of defeating his young adversary; in fact, had virtually accomplished it. There was little chance that Hugh could escape from the toils that he had spread for him, and his resignation had helped Callander, had gone far to help him to victory just when it looked least like victory. But Finlaison—he sat snarling, like an angry wolf. Finlaison, who had been his man, his tool, and was now his master—what had Finlaison told? The haunting thought, the dreadful thought of Kalyph, had he told *that*? He had fancied that he owned Finlaison, body and soul, that he had paid for him long ago, that he would not betray the murder while he yet might buy Betty with his silence. How dared the wretched villain defy him, and risk her loss and ruin her good name? Yet it was Betty's fault! He took no count, in his blind wrath, of the very instinct of self-preservation that was so strong in his own breast; he forgot that Finlaison had his own ends to serve in the extremity to which Callander's devious ways and his own mad passions had brought him, that the scarcely quelled fear of the mob must possess him like a nightmare. Callander forgot that not even a monkey will burn off his paws to pull chestnuts out of the fire.

"Price!" he jeered. "Holland's got it right enough. I don't believe all this cant in the courts—just show and blow! He's got the money, you mark that!"

Dr. Chester eyed him coolly. "It was disproved," he said, "and you know it. Shame and nonsense, Eli!"

"I know it?" Eli screamed, wriggling up in his chair again. "I tell you——" He stopped, his eyes glaring fiercely over the other old man's shoulder.

The door had opened to admit another visitor, and the servant announced Governor Leslie. A small, thin man with a sombre face came in, the man who had stood last night on the balcony of the town-hall and faced the mob. A dark man, a secret man, but not without power. Dr. Chester rose to go, but Callander stopped him. "Sit down," he said still harshly. "I want you to tell the Governor all you've been telling me about McFinn and Andrews and Finlaison."

The Governor had drawn a chair close to Callander's, and, sitting down, with his back to the light, the old doctor seemed to see nothing in his narrow dark face but the whites of his eyes.

"I reckon the Governor knows," William Chester said reluctantly. "It's pretty well known about the court-house, isn't it, Governor Leslie, that Finlaison's been telling tales out of school to save himself?"

Leslie nodded. "I've just heard about most of it over the 'phone, and I've seen the sheriff. He's been trying to get off. Some friends of yours and mine are helping him, too, Callander."

"You mean Hal Andrews and——" Eli fixed him with an eye that seemed to be growing dull, as though a film had spread over it. Dr. Chester sat watching him, a crease between his brows.

"Hal Andrews and McFinn," Leslie replied, in his hard, dry voice, but he was moving his hands nervously. "They put some affidavits in the commonwealth attorney's office day before yesterday. I know that for a fact. What's more——" he stopped, weighing his words, his eyes on Callander—"I know what's in them. I was told half an hour ago. At the same time the sheriff handed me Finlaison's affidavit to read, made this morning in his cell. He was refused bail, both on account of Hugh Holland's condition and the excitement in the fourth and fifth wards. I'm an old friend, Dr. Chester's an old friend; I came to tell you, Callander."

The old man's face was purple. "Then, blast it, why don't you tell me?" he shouted.

Dr. Chester rose. "Hold on, Leslie!" he exclaimed. "He's not fit—don't you see?—Lord! man, you've done it!"

For, unheeding, the Governor had leaned forward, whispering hurriedly in Callander's ear: "Finlaison has betrayed you. We know now how Kalyph died and——"

Eli fell back in his chair with a thick, inarticulate sound, his eyes fixed and glazed, his cheeks purple, his mouth open. They could hear him breathe in the hall. The doctor ran to him and began to unfasten his collar.

"You've done it!" he cried to the startled Governor. "He's got a stroke. Here, give me your hand—so—more air—I reckon he's done for any way!"

XII.

It was dusk when Dr. Chester came slowly down the path and passed between the tall white gate-posts with the eagles. He was very weary and showed it. His shoulders were bowed and his steps lagged; even the humorous twinkle in his kindly eyes was gone. All that wealth could do for the stricken millionaire had been done, and he had helped to do it. There were four doctors over him now, and old William Chester, more experienced but more simple than the rest, gave way, and gave it gladly. To his mind there was but one thing

left—the huddled figure in the centre of the bed, that seemed suddenly grown too large for it, huddled and silent and grim, a look almost of mockery in the lowering and terrible eyes that understood, and followed, and struggled to express what the thickened tongue could no longer utter. His old friend had tried for hours to interpret that fearful, speechless gaze, to find the key to his struggling mind, but in vain, and when he went out at last a kind of horror seized him, new to one of his experience. He had looked on death in all its different shapes, and often with sorrow and pain, but never before had this life in death been so fearful; the following stare of those dreadful eyes possessed him like nightmare, he could not shake it off.

Very slowly he walked down the long street, stopped here and there by eager questioners, and always answering with a shake of the head, or one significant word. It irritated him, too, to see that other element, the element that is neither sympathy nor curiosity, but disappointment that the situation is ruined, the chief actor snatched away on the eve of a great scandal. There is a malice, a poisoned envy in the blood, that makes people almost greedy for a great man's downfall, eager to pull down the successful, to dash the victorious into defeat; such human nature stands aghast, questioning the truth, when death steps in and takes away the culprit, suspends judgment, and recommends, by its great silence, the plea of mercy. The old doctor saw eagerness for news, disappointment, almost vexation, reflected in face after face, and anger, of a healthy and normal sort, grew in his heart. He thrust aside their inquiries with a curtness that at other times he would have thought almost churlish, and hurried away from them at last into the old street where the hospital stood. The light was burning in that upper room, and Dr. Chester toiled up the long stairs and found Hugh fully conscious.

The old man took his temperature, compared notes with the nurse, and, finding the patient's condition most reassuring, dismissed her for ten minutes, sat down by the bed and told Hugh of Callander's seizure; he knew that, in a way, it would relieve the tension. Hugh listened, turning a pale face on the doctor, and something in the grimness of his expression struck the latter as a sharp contrast to the eager curiosity on those other faces that had not the same cause to hate the stricken man, or to rejoice in his end. The old doctor leaned forward on his elbows and buried his face in his hands. "Lord!" he said. "The wickedness of human nature. He's going, Hugh; he's going fast."

"You mean Callander?" Holland's voice was weak but clear.

Dr. Chester's hands dropped on the table by the bed, and he raised a weary face. "He was seized while I was there—they'll say I ought to have cured him, warded it off, done miracles."

"You could n't," Holland said.

"I? No, nor any living man! He was marked, death had him in its grip. But this killed him—this!"—the doctor struck the table heavily with his hand—"this knowledge that the end of it had come! Defeat and disgrace and—God knows what! Leslie came there—we were alone, Eli and I, as we've been a dozen times lately, and I told him of Finlaison, I warned him that Jimmy Finlaison had betrayed him. I suppose you think I did wrong to do it"—the old doctor swung around in his chair and faced Hugh—"but I'd have warned him if I'd had to go to jail for it!"

"I don't think you did wrong," Holland replied quietly. "It was too late—that was all."

The doctor assented. "I know," he said; "but I warned him, and I saw his alarm and his anger were both dangerous. I tried to calm him, and then Leslie came in. He's a scoundrel, Hugh, if he is the Governor!"

Holland smiled grimly. "That does n't always keep a man from being Governor," he said weakly.

The doctor nodded. "Leslie told him—Leslie whispered in his ear. He told him about Kalyph's death, the rights of it at last, I fancy. Lord! it was deadly as the poison in Hamlet! He had his fit, and he won't live."

"Are you sure?" Holland asked, looking at the old lined face above him with great earnestness.

"Dead sure, Hugh," Dr. Chester said. "He's got his walking ticket."

"Thank God!"

The doctor started up from his chair, his face whitening. "You?" he cried, forgetful of the patient in the man. "You? You're not glad he's going to die?"

"Glad?" Holland's tone was significant. "If I could walk I'd go out and shout for joy!"

William Chester looked at him with a kind of horror. "I should n't have believed it!"

"Would n't you?"—the younger man smiled. "Dr. Chester," he said quietly, "I have papers that would have ruined him, that would have put him in jail. There was enough of this Kalyph business outlined to lead to an investigation—you can shadow the results. I've resigned—I would not prosecute him—but—some one must—unless he dies."

Dr. Chester sank again into his chair; he looked old and shrivelled, and the twinkle had altogether died out of his eyes. "He'll die, Hugh," he said. "I'll do my best to save him—we'll all do our best—but it's beyond human skill. And you—you've got the power

to ruin him!" The old man paused, passing his hand slowly across his brow. "It's a mystery—life! Great as the mystery of death. He had much good in him—hidden away. I've seen it in him. See how I talk as if he were already dead! Well, so he is; the body is stiff and helpless, and the soul—Lord!" he shuddered, "those fearful haunting eyes!"

"And yet it is a mercy," Holland said gravely, "to him—and to them all; he lived to sure disgrace."

Dr. Chester's head sank forward on his breast; he clutched at the arms of his chair. "The pity of it!" he murmured. "The pity of it!" Then he looked at Holland. "Hugh," he said, "Leslie told me Callander shot Kalyph and killed him. I never did believe it was suicide. Finlaison means to tell it in his trial for shooting you."

Hugh smiled faintly. "He'll never tell it," he said. "I'm going to get well and block off the publicity. That scoundrel will have to shut his mouth."

Dr. Chester laid his finger on his pulse. "Good Lord!" he gasped. "What an old fool I am!" Then he called back the nurse. "You stay here," he said, "and drive me out if I come in. I have n't got the sense I was born with."

Hugh smiled, turning his face to the wall. "I'll get well, doctor," he said, "in spite of you."

Old Callander lingered on ten days or more, unconscious, and Hugh grew steadily better in the hospital. When it was certain that he would live, Finlaison had been admitted to bail—that was five days before. Late one afternoon McFinn came up to see Holland. He had come steadily every day, and twice he had brought flowers, his rough cheek reddening as he carried them in. To-day he was empty-handed, but the nurse left him with Hugh for five minutes' speech, she said. McFinn stood awkwardly in the sunshine, twisting his hat in his hands.

"I say, Holland, Jimmy Finlaison has jumped his bail!"

Hugh turned his head quickly. "How do you know?" he asked. McFinn laughed. "He's gone—been gone twelve hours."

Hugh uttered an exclamation. "It seems unlikely!"

"Not a whit," retorted McFinn. "Not a whit! It's said downtown that it's something Jimmy told to Leslie and the sheriff that gave old Callander his fit. He was Jimmy's first bondsman."

Holland was silent. How far would this save the stricken man? For Betty's sake, he rejoiced.

"I reckon Jimmy jumped just in time," McFinn went on. "They say old Callander's dying—do you know?"

Hugh nodded. "I believe he cannot live," he said slowly.

McFinn stared away into the sunshine, a curious expression on his

hard face. "Well," he said at last, "I'm sorry! There's all there is about it! I meant to pull him down—I reckon I have any way—for I believed he was the biggest knave of all; but somehow—now—I can't seem to remember anything but the place he filled, and how he brought us forward. Lord! he made this town, as far as a man can. There is n't a brick in it worth mentioning that would n't have Eli Callander stamped on it if you dug it up and it was n't ashamed to acknowledge its father. He was the bone and sinew of the place—and its nerve, too."

Holland looked at him thoughtfully, something like a grim smile on his lips. "Yet you pulled him down, McFinn," he observed. "Your papers are locked up in my desk. If he lives, you'll ruin him."

The other man hung his head. "I know it," he said bluntly, "and, by heaven! I feel myself a brute!" Then he turned sharply and faced Hugh. "Is that the reason you resigned?"

Holland nodded.

McFinn held out his hand. "Shake," he said harshly. "I believe in you."

"When I least deserve it," the younger man replied curtly. "I had my own reasons."

McFinn wrung his hand. "I don't ask 'em," he said. "Give me those papers."

There was a moment's pause. Then Hugh said flatly: "No! It is n't in my power, McFinn. If he lives, I'll have to give them up to my successor."

"I gave 'em to you!" McFinn insisted.

"They're not yours or mine now."

"Are you going to give them out if he lives?"

"I must."

"The devil!" McFinn exclaimed, and left him abruptly.

Even at this early hour there were watchers on the street corners, a group of the curious and the idle waiting for news of the death from the great house, where the sun shone on the long row of front windows and glinted on the bronze lions, who stared unwinkingly. McFinn looked at the house as he passed close to the high iron fence. He felt that he had dealt one of the worst blows against the fallen magnate, and the old man's enmity seemed to stretch a shadowy hand even now to threaten him with retaliation. McFinn was not superstitious, but he took off his hat and mopped his forehead nervously and hurried past.

The next day at noon, when the tide went out, Eli Callander's grim soul went with it, journeying toward "that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns."

Over the river the clouds lifted and a keen white light cut the horizon like a naked knife, as the dark clouds of that inscrutable and tempestuous life were rent in twain by the more poignant thrust of Death. The murmured story of Kalyph's fearful end had crept about, and the town was full of whispers, of surmises, of a vague and shuddering recognition that their idol, their great man, the Magnate of Paradise, was fallen. Yet as if to hush those insidious whispers, to throttle scandal in the throat, to set up its tottering idol, the town made mourning. The bells began to toll, deep-throated and protestant, and here and there a flag dropped to half staff.

Eli had built up his fortunes with determined and unscrupulous zeal. No obstacle had been too great to overcome, no depth too low to fathom to attain his ends. And, having gained it, at what cost no man knew, he had maintained it, by deceit, by chicanery, by corruption, and—once—by more violent and criminal means. His career, his success, his place in politics and finance, these were the compelling facts of his existence. He who threatened one of these, or all, as Hugh Holland had, must either bend to the magnate's iron will or be sacrificed. So he would have sacrificed Betty to shield himself from discovery and ruin. Yet by some odd touch of fortune, or, rather, by the inscrutable law of life, there had been a loop-hole in his fortress, Finlaison had his secret, and through that Finlaison became his master, and at last at one blow had destroyed the whole edifice that had cost a lifetime's pains and crimes to erect. Yet even now his ghostly finger seemed to be laid on the shuddering lips of scandal, even now he had not lost his power to hush the talk to a whisper; men did not fully grasp the fact that the magnate had been unmasked, that a criminal stood in his stead.

What was it, this impalpable and hideous tale? they said. The commonwealth attorney held papers, yes, but they were not given out, and what were they, what would they be in the broad light of day? As for Kalyph, it had been known for years that he shot himself; what then? A breath, a whisper, a hideous creeping scandal! Let the bells toll and drown it, let them boom out over the old town and do honor to the man who had honored it and been its honor before the world. Thus did Eli mock his assailants, winning the last trick by death!

The bells were tolling in Dr. Chester's ears when he climbed the stairs to Hugh's room in the hospital. The stairs seemed long, and the old man stopped twice to breathe. He looked singularly broken; the whimsical smile was gone for the moment. At the door of the room he stopped again. Betty was sitting beside the white bed, and Hugh held her hand. On the bed was a packet tied with red tape. They both looked up at the doctor, and Hugh smiled.

"He's dead," said the old man heavily, "thank God! Finlaison's gone, too. What he told about Kalyph will go no further. Mrs. Callander has begged Leslie to keep it still for a while, to let the world believe that Kalyph shot himself. I reckon it's the wisest course now."

Hugh turned and laid the papers in Betty's lap; it was the fateful packet that she had pleaded for. Dr. Chester looked from one to the other.

"It's the testimony against him," Hugh explained, "and he's dead—I have the right to give them to her if I wish. Betty feels that she owes him a debt; he sheltered her childhood, took in the orphan and the fatherless."

Dr. Chester leaned heavily on his cane; his face was drawn and pinched. "Betty," he said, "I felt as you did, that you owed a debt, and that old Eli had shown a redeeming point in sheltering an orphan child. But I was wrong. He could do nothing else, unless, indeed, he was the blackest rogue unhung. You hear the bells toll? Let them toll, but, Betty, I've heard the true story. Nickens just told me. Callander ruined your father, robbed him, foreclosed mortgage after mortgage on him, got his last cent, and when he went to him in despair he mocked him with his poor business management. Then your father killed himself, there was danger of talk, that the truth might come out, and Eli has always dreaded the naked light of truth upon his dealings. He took you and made a virtue of bringing you up. He deceived poor Mrs. Callander; what she told you was his garbled story. Every cent that is left is yours by right. Finlaison knew it; he was determined to get it all by marrying you. He'd been robbing Eli, and he wanted to secure himself beyond attack. But now you shall get it."

"And Mrs. Callander?" Betty said quietly.

"You can provide for her if you choose."

Betty stood between them, very still, holding the papers. The sunshine from the window had at first only reached to the hem of her white skirt, now it crept higher and touched the flowers on her breast. Her face was pale, with an expression at once gentle and calm; her eyes were luminous as she met Hugh's. "We do not want the money," she said. "We will not take it. Mrs. Callander can have it all, poor soul."

"You have no need to spare the old man's memory now, Betty," said Hugh gently.

She went to the fireplace and laid the papers on the empty hearth and touched a match to them. The flames leaped up, the papers crackled and crumbled to white ashes.

"I can afford to spare his memory this much," she said. "I will

not be the one to take revenge. He suffered, and he has gone to meet his Judge."

Hugh, looking at her, smiled faintly. "Betty," he said, "thank God you are none of his!"

She turned and went over to the bed again, and, kneeling down beside it, laid her head against Hugh's arm. "Thank God that you could let me do it!" she whispered. "It is blessed to forgive—and we are happy."

Holland laid his hand tenderly on her bowed head. His eyes met Dr. Chester's. "We were married this morning, doctor," he said simply.

Dr. Chester took off his spectacles and rubbed them violently. "God bless you both!" he said, "and"—he bent his head—"forgive the Magnate of Paradise."



SPRING IN NOVEMBER

BY CHARLES HANSON TOWNE

WHEN Autumn's purple banners
Are flying on the hills,
And lost is all the wonder
Of Spring's gold daffodils;

When flaunting flags of crimson
Are torn in shreds, and hurled
Through many a windy valley
Across the lonely world,

I pine for that young beauty
The valiant April gave,
And strive, above the moaning
At the Year's solemn grave,

To hear the skylark utter
His old, lost, silver tone. . . .
And lo! while earth knows Autumn,
Spring is my very own!

SNAPSHOTS AROUND NAPLES

By Arthur Stanley Riggs, F. R. G. S.

“**V**EDI Napoli, poi mori!” (“After Naples, die!”) pun the Neapolitans, playing upon the name of a picturesque little hamlet not far from the great crescent metropolis. But to the wondering American Naples has an even greater charm in its people than in its exquisite scenery. It is a city of noise exuberant, perhaps the noisiest in the world, and the cheerful people not only love to make a noise themselves, but quite insist that the strangers who visit them enjoy the racket by day and night as much as themselves. And at least if the foreigner cannot really enjoy the bedlam, he can find much to compensate him, for the galling fugue that assails his weary ears from daylight until the small hours, in the curious customs and sights of this joyous city.

Even our hotel, rising upon the Partenope along the swelling shore of the radiant bay, proved a very centre of adventure and amusing experience, which began not five minutes after we had reached our rooms. Dusty and tired with the long ride down from Rome, we demanded hot baths. To my amazement, the clean little maid who answered the bell shook her head sadly. “I’m sorry, sir,” she lisped, “but we have had five baths already to-day, and there is no more hot water. Perhaps to-morrow——” She brightened suddenly. “If the *Signora* must have a bath now, there is a barber-ship around the corner. They always have hot water!”

But that was too Japanese an idea for *La Signora*, already in bathrobe and slippers, and perforce she did without the much desired luxury. We were still discussing the conveniences of Italian hotels, when we heard a glad noise. A little way down the street was a typical Neapolitan trio who, as we appeared at the window, came directly underneath and began to perform with the greatest gusto. The young woman alternately tinkled a mandolin and snapped her castanets; her companion player made queer noises on a rusty guitar; the tenor threw back his head, closed his eyes, and bellowed out at the top of his lungs, “*O sole mio!*”

That was the beginning of the end. At first we were delighted to listen, and I think our reputation for throwing pennies must have spread through all Naples, for from the first party of *cantatori* sprang a continual procession of singers of both sexes and all voices. Before the week was over, instead of throwing pennies we felt very much more inclined to throw something else. Morning, noon, and night, whether we were in the hotel or away from it, those persistent musicians were always on hand; and though years have elapsed since the memorable day when we were first serenaded out of Naples, I can still feel the strange strains of "*Funicula, funicula!*" "*O sole mio,*" "*Margherita,*" and other familiar Italian airs ring in my head every time the green-grocer reminds me proudly that he is a Neapolitan.



At Christmas-time still other frightful prodigies of anti-harmonics are heard throughout the city. Ancient beggars, usually straggling in pairs, make the night hideous with the husky strains drawn from battered old flutes, which occasionally succeed in giving the players' fingers the slip and emit the most piercing shrieks of delight. But all musicians in Naples are not like these.

We were breakfasting in our room one morning when there floated up to us a very different sort of music, pure, clear, and sweet. Breakfast was forgotten as I stepped to the window and looked out, knowing that this particular voice had never been trained in the street. Below on the pavement were two musicians: one, a man playing an accordion considerably the worse for wear; the other, an old woman, wrinkled, white-haired, toothless, her spectacles pushed up over her forehead. She must have been fully sixty, yet she sang the "Flower Song" with all the charm and grand air of a prima donna. Seizing my camera, I ran down to the street, determined to get her story, for story I knew there must be, and probably a tragic one at that. But the old *cantatrice* was shy as a girl—all she would tell me was her name.

Coming back into the hotel disappointed, I found that even the waiters knew her story, and our man told it willingly enough as he cleared away the breakfast things.

"Everybody in Naples knows old Gabriella Rosanno," he said. "For years she was prima donna contralto of the San Carlo Opera House. She was great. Royalty has listened to her wonderful singing. But one day she made the fatal mistake. A friend came to her, he told her he needed money, and she endorsed his note for ten thousand lire; but the friend proved a rascal, and poor old Gabriella had to pay. The police came. They took away all her savings, her house, her

furniture, everything she had. It broke her heart. She could no longer sing in San Carlo. What was there left for the poor old woman to do? She had to go out on the streets to sing?"

After that pitiful story, of which the proud old singer had breathed never a word, she was always certain of the enormous largesse of a whole franc when she came every few days beneath our window, to offer welcome contrast to the wretched howlers of the street.

These same streets, by the way, are full of beggars, as numerous and determined as their native fleas. Well-dressed, pert young girls, toothless hags pretending to give their withered breasts to babies borrowed for the occasion, stalwart old men and young boys followed and annoyed us continually, until, to escape them, more than once we were compelled to take one of the cabs which the impertinent and vituperative drivers leave standing squarely upon the street crossing, in the hope that the stranger, rather than walk around them in the dust or mud, will get in and take a ride.

More than once we were forced to flee from the beggars, whose commonest cry is, "*Signore: dame cinque soldi, mangia maccheroni! Mangia maccheroni!*"

Given the pennies they demanded, they rushed off to one of the economical kitchens, of which there are scores in the city. Seizing steaming, heaping platefuls eagerly, the boys twined the snaky stuff over their fingers, held high above their heads, and gulped it down in strings almost unchewed. It was like an old-fashioned negro pie-eating contest at a country fair, the object seeming to be to see who could the soonest swallow the red hot viands. Their throats must have been copper and their constitutions iron, for no sooner had they finished the first plateful than they began whining again, rubbing their distended little bellies, and begging for more.



Some of the older beggars are content to sit quietly in their baskets in the sun all day long, repellent masses of rags and disease, whining at the passers-by, but taking what is thrown to them passively. They are not so bad; but the others are so great a nuisance that the local government has made repeated attempts to suppress them—attempts which are futile so long as the ever good-natured tourist thoughtlessly scatters about his coppers.

Directly opposite the beginning of the Villa Nazionale or park, the fishermen of the city have one of their landing-stages, and many an idle hour we spent with the watching crowd, which must have seen the simple operations since childhood. A large, heavy boat filled with the cumbrous seine pulls out to sea two or three hundred yards, swings the

net overboard in a line parallel with the shore, and, leading in the long hauling ropes, ties up at the foot of the stone steps, while the fishermen on shore slowly heave the net home. Over his shoulder each man wears a broad band of canvas with a short, stout cord attached, enabling him to throw the weight of his body upon the ropes, a much more comfortable operation than dragging in the heavy tackle with bare, wet hands. As the big seine comes slowly in, the customs guard who patrols ceaselessly up and down the waterfront steps up, examines the catch critically, and, after he has taken his pick of the finest, permits the toilers to bring the swirling, wriggling catch up into their baskets.



The principal fish-markets are down in that section of the city near the mole and the commercial harbor called the Basso Porto. Here everything is cheerfully dirty, and the women in the stalls are as likely as not to be combing their hair over the fish as they sell them. People crowd about the booths, sniffing, handling, testing with dirty fingers, bargaining gaily or with quarrelsome sharpness. Ice apparently is a luxury never heard of, the hot southern sun does quick work, and in the afternoon the Basso Porto is to be avoided by sensitive noses.

The Neapolitans have a proverb which declares that "where the sun does not enter, the doctor does." But, notwithstanding that saying, they build their houses as high and as close together as the tenements in the heart of the New York Ghetto. Such a street as the Vico Pallonetto à Santa Lucia, really nothing but a long flight of slippery stone stairs, is crowded full of the most picturesque sights in the city, and day after day we prowled about in this vicinity in search of adventures which were usually forthcoming.

The open windows revealed many a domestic scene—women completing their toilets with cheerful disregard of prying eyes; dressing themselves or their offspring, spanking the latter when necessary to the accompaniment of lugubrious wails, not only in the houses but out upon the roofs, in open doorways, and in the very street itself. They seemed to make no attempt to conceal the usual domestic offices from view, and in that respect they resembled the Japanese, to whom nothing that is a convenience—even when it comes to bathing in public—is a matter of comment.

But the most delirious gaiety of the year is at Whitsuntide, when some twenty or twenty-five thousand of the Neapolitans decorate their carriages in most fantastic fashion, or hire others similarly decorated, and make the famous pilgrimage to Monte Vergine. All classes take part in this yearly display, which is really an endurance horse-race.

The rich are magnificently dressed; even the poor wear silks and satins, frequently covered with laces; and every year almost all the men wear hats of the same kind, the style changing with each pilgrimage. After the worshipping at Monte Vergine, the whole army comes tearing back in one mad scramble to see who can reach Naples first.

We were sitting dispiritedly in our rooms on Whitmonday when, about five o'clock in the afternoon, a most diabolical uproar assailed us. Running to the window, we looked out, wondering what had happened. Over the rough cobbles of the street below was rushing the vanguard of an astonishing procession. In the lead was a large barouche piled high in the rear with boxes and enormous lunch-baskets, crowded with six stoutish people and drawn at a rattling pace by three stocky little stallions. From the sockets between the horses' ears long, very stiff feathers stuck straight up like magnified hackles on a fighting cock. The black harness had been covered over with white plastrons picked out with gorgeous silver and crimson paper decorations. From the sides of the carriage depended flags and bunting. Cracking his whip till it sounded like a volley of pistol shots, and yelling at the top of his voice—partly to spur on his jaded team and partly to announce his triumphal entry into the city for the feast and fireworks in the evening at the lower end of the bay—the driver whirled his patrons at the speed of an express train past the hotel and down along the Villa Nazionale, vanishing in a cloud of dust by the blue slope of the Posillipo.

After him clattered other carriages by the score, and until long after dark the rival vehicles swung into the Partenope from the Via Santa Lucia, sometimes on two wheels, the occupants carousing, drinking, shrieking—pandemonium itself was quiet compared to this riotous celebration. Indeed, so furious is the insane rush to get back to the city from the distant shrine, that the day after the worshippers return the newspapers of Naples print from one to three columns of names of those killed or injured in the exciting dash.



This Whitmonday madness, however, was scarcely so interesting as the regular *passaggiata* during the season; and in Naples alone, of all Italian cities, is the spirit of absolute democracy the prevailing genius of this important social rite. Every evening after four o'clock during the winter the Via Roma is crowded with vehicles of every description. And in the spring, before Society leaves Naples for the resorts, the pageant is transferred to encircle the Villa Nazionale, the handsome little park at the lower end of the Via Partenope, facing the bay. The

cabmen's greatest joy seems to be in taking an unwary tourist into this parade, and then charging him two lire extra for "doing society."

In order to see the whole performance perfectly we went to the park one afternoon early, securing a bench at the street rail, within a yard or so of the road. In a few moments the first of the carriages in the *passaggiata* passed us. Five minutes later another one appeared, and from that time on until dark the long street was an endless chain of carriages of every conceivable shape, age, size, and color. In and out through the mass of private victorias and hired open cabs rolled a stately high cart with their Royal Highnesses, the Duke and Duchess of Aosta. Two magnificent bays drew the vehicle, and upon the box sat an unusually tall coachman and footman, dressed in cockaded black silk hats, scarlet long-coats, white doeskin tights, and varnished black boots with buff tops.

Directly behind this royal equipage an impudent but most winning and attractive little donkey, a tiny Sardinian not very much larger than a teddy bear, trotted along so fast that the staccato of his dainty hoofs upon the pavement sounded like the roll of a small drum. The cart itself was ridiculously small, a mere painted box on two wheels, and into it two fat little men had crowded themselves with considerable difficulty—but the donkey's feathers were as long and as stiff and as prickly as those worn by the smartest of the private horses.



Seedy old victorias, broughams, cabriolets, and other vehicles innocent of color or varnish for many a long year, and pulled by decrepit animals whom we wished we might buy and mercifully execute, contrasted sharply with the better class of hired rigs and the fine private conveyances. Here and there a young nobleman rode alone, elegantly oblivious of the stares and whispers of the throng about him.

Families too poor to keep a carriage go shares in one with others as poor as themselves; and when it so happens that they are of the nobility, each one invariably has a set of doors for the turnout. Thus the family rides secure in the knowledge that its own arms and blazonry tell the gaping crowd unmistakably, "This is a noble conveyance."

Around and around the park the procession went in a maddening whirl of wheels and hoofs. In and out among the more sedate vehicles dashed spirited little donkey-carts, here and there carrying a burly fisherman and his bareheaded spouse, or even a green-groceress alone in her ride, the common plaid shawl about her neck passing strange among the Paris hats and frocks of the gentry. As the fashionable vehicles dropped out, the clatter and confusion, the cracking of the whips, the excited shouts as one donkey triumphed over another,

increased rather than diminished. Abandoning the circular course about the Nazionale, the drivers breezed their fleet little beasts back and forth along the bay, from the lower end of the park down past our hotel to the upper extremity of the Partenope, and long after dark some of the racing donkeys still continued to patter like rain underneath our windows.



We had the opportunity of seeing a very different *passeggiata* on another visit to Naples. Vesuvius, furiously majestic, was taking grim vengeance upon the rash mortals who had dared build upon his shaggy flanks. Along the slopes of the thundering volcano, people were fleeing from their homes in abject terror, tumbling their household goods and glass-encased saints recklessly into carts, drawn in many instances by all the family animals—a donkey, a horse, and an ox. Desperately they drove away from the mountain in the endeavor to reach safety in the distant open country; while everywhere those of stronger faith were carrying images of their patron saints out from the churches in devout procession to repel the powers of destruction; and in the square in the centre of the little town of Ottaiano, the surgeons of the Red Cross guarded the solemn bivouac of those who would never flee another eruption.

So buoyant is the Vesuvian, however, that even the anxious agony of an eruption depresses him for the moment only. Before the lava has cooled quite two feet down, before the rescuing troops have shovelled away a millionth part of the ashes and pumice, the sturdy peasant is back among the ruins, planning a new start. Ready to point out the wreck of his home to the tourist with a laugh, he sings at his work, glad with the pure joy of being alive, completely absorbed and happy in that rosy future of care-free prosperity where Vesuvius never frowns and the sun always smiles.



A DEAD LETTER COME TO LIFE

By Anne Warner

IT was a dead letter, which had been sent to his old address and forwarded to his new one. It was laid with the newspaper at his place at breakfast, but the newspaper looked so much more interesting of the two that he merely put the letter in his pocket and forgot about it until he was lunching at the club that noon.

He opened it then—with some vague curiosity as to what might be inside. There was a good deal inside—more than he expected: three letters, in fact. One was written by himself and was headed with his old address—thus accounting for the Dead Letter. One was from Elsie, was undated, and bore no address, thus further accounting for the Dead Letter. The third letter was from Elsie's aunt, and not only bore no address within, but had been mailed without either name or destination on the envelope—thus again, and for the third time, accounting for the Dead Letter.

It took him a minute or two to sort the three into proper order, but directly he had so sorted them, he read them with deep interest—an interest which led him wholly to forget to eat his lunch. As he was a man, and a man is a man, and lunch is lunch, this statement might be doubted, but for the letters.

Letter I.

MY DEAR ELSIE:

Let us call it off. I'm tired of the fussing. It seems to me that if you really cared for me there'd be less of it. I mean to treat you fairly, but it does n't look to me as if you treat me fairly. I never call you to account, and yet you certainly are enjoying yourself with a good many besides me, but any tale that any one carries to you about anything that I may or may not have done is instantly brought up against me, and you cry and don't believe me, and things go generally on the rocks. I've begun to think that it is n't worth while. I'm mighty tired of it. You said last night that you wanted to end the engagement, so let us do it. It's never been announced, so we haven't any explanations to make to any one. I'm going down to the beach for four or five days, and when I come back I'll do up your letters and all that, and we'll make an end of it. I'm not mad—I'm just sick of it all.

What do you say?

L.

Letter II.

DEAR AUNTIE:

I've just this minute received this letter. What shall I do? You know marriage isn't the serious thing it was in your time, and if we married and could n't get on his family would do everything proper—I'd be better off any way than I am now. He's quite the richest man I know, and he has nice ideas about generosity and all that, and I know he's good-hearted. Of course I've never raved over him as some of the girls do, but I really have liked him plenty well enough to marry him. What he says about the rows is altogether true, for I can't see the faintest reason for my putting up with half the things he does, and some of his friends I will *never* receive.

But I can't see why we should break it off. I don't particularly fancy any other man, and if we are unhappy after we are married we can break it off then. I think I had better go on with it.

Now, do write me your opinion, and return me his letter and my letter, so I can look them over together. You know I am never foolish or romantic or given to any kind of nonsense.

Affectionately your niece,

ELSIE.

Letter III.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I have one of my blinding headaches, but I will answer you at once and send it by Lizbet, who is just going. Poor old thing, she gets more deaf and more stupid every day, but you know my charity towards all.

I read his letter and your letter with deep interest. You are quite right. My dear, you would be unutterably foolish to give up such a chance. He will always have a valet and you will always have a maid, so whether you get on together or not cannot matter much. If he is disagreeable, you can travel, or he can live somewhere else, or, as you very sensibly say, you can get a divorce. I should never consider giving him up for a minute. There is no reason for it, and no use in it. If I can get to the telephone I'll call you up this evening and get you out here to-morrow. I am too blind to write all that I want to say.

Your affectionate aunt,

N. T.

It was of course plain that poor, stupid old Lizbet had stamped and posted an unaddressed letter, which she should have delivered at the door.

But the man did not think about that. He just sat quiet, staring at the letters.

For Elsie was now his wife.

They had not been so very happy—but she *was* his wife.

The letters lay on the white cloth, he took up his fork mechanically, he was young and light-hearted, but—but he laid the fork down again, and, starting out of his seat, stood dizzily still a moment. The waiter stared. It was very odd. And Elsie—Elsie—*Elsie* was now his wife.

MARY AND MARTHA AT LUNCH

By Marion Hill

Author of "The Pettison Twins," etc.

TO the two Kenealy children the best part of the mid-day meal was the fact that their father did not come home to it. Not that they harbored grudge against him—far from it—indeed, they rather held the opinion (tactfully submerged) that a father was a more pleasant parent than a mother, not being constantly around to pile up trouble,—a father having some good points in common with a comet, his reappearance being enhanced in value by the length of his disappearance,—but they had discovered by experience that a table from which he was absent afforded their talkative young selves an area of less restricted conversation than a table which he graced.

Therefore, they chatted in a cheerful undertone all through the lunch function, their mother presiding in a blessedly deep abstraction at the head of the table.

Upon this particular occasion the meal was reaching its close when Mary, a wretchedly imaginative child, said tentatively, "This is a lake." She pictorially explained herself by billowing up the watery part of her rice pudding with her spoon, and she looked winningly at Martha to help the latter into betraying symptoms of a willingness to embrace the game.

When it came to the hazy realms of pure thought, Martha was not always dependable, often turning philosophically balky at many a gallop of the invention which a more facile mind would have leaped unthinking after.

She took a scientifically minute survey of her saucer. Its contents were to her sufficiently attractive just as they were, unembellished by fancy. Graven upon her face was the stern fact that, so far as she was concerned, the pudding was still but pudding.

"With islands in it!" begged Mary, growing prettily hectic and intense. "Islands!" With her spoon-bowl she dabbed some upheaved hummocks of rice. "Islands!"

"All right," reluctantly agreed Martha, giving in for peace's sake

against the dictates of her sane judgment. "I'll eat an island." This she did—to Mary's poetic pain. Then, chancing to mine out a raisin with her spoon, she rapped it accusingly and demanded, "What's these?"

The game not being hers, she refused to waste her brain in perfecting its details.

"These," rhapsodized Mary, devoutly accolading each of her own raisins with the spoon-tip, "are dear little blue-eyed babies out for a boat ride."

"H'm!" grunted Martha. Black-eyed, the loving mention of *blue* made her enviously sensitive. "Then I'll chew up a dear little blue-eyed baby." She immediately did so. And the seeds scrunched like infant bones.

The cannibal effect of this threw the emotional Mary into a real terror and set her to shrieking with hideous abandon.

At the sound, Mrs. Kenealy's maternal instincts left cabin seclusion and came at once on deck to quell mutiny. "Martha," she chided authoritatively, "stop worrying Mary."

Now, to the meanest intelligence, had that intelligence been following affairs, Martha had n't worried Mary in the least; it had been entirely Mary who had worried Mary. People who elect to be imaginative have no business whatever to get emotional concerning an outcome. They always do, though. That is how Retributive Justice plays even with them.

The Marthas have as much right to chew up their blue-eyed babies as the Marys have to discover them in a rice pudding. But this optimistic and charitable view is seldom taken by the world at large.

"The Kenealy children are not at all alike!" said that world, shaking its disapproving head. The shaking was always towards Martha, thus indicating that *she* was the failure.

Well, she was not "alike." There's no denying it.

Mary was slim and an ornament to society; Martha was stocky and no ornament. Mary had an angel's golden curls; Martha had a diabolical thatch of straight black. Mary had a birdlike voice filled with tender quavers warranted to wheedle an entrance into any and every human heart; Martha possessed but a brusquely catapultic tone which, without her volition, sped her words like stones from a sling, so that they always hit and mostly hurt. Mary had star-bright eyes of azure, fringed with extravagantly long lashes; Martha's eyes were dully black, average size, with lash just physiologically sufficient,—no more.

Martha's cross was not alone this difference of hers from Mary, but was also the fact that she was held to be responsible for it,—as if it arose from her sheer personal laziness. Worse still—not content with

treating these differences as mere surface short-sightedness on Martha's part, the world acted as if it understood them to be due to interior blight of the spirit, arguing that because Martha's eyes were hard and beady, her judgment of her fellows would be hard and beady, too; and so on, throughout the list. Therefore were people unenthusiastic about her comings and goings, especially her comings, greeting her politely as a guest but with no exuberance.

Although unresigned, Martha was quite accustomed to being adjudged wanting at all points, and she therefore made no audible rebellion against being scolded for cannibalism.

While still on deck, though preparing to go below again to rejoin her thoughts, Mrs. Kenealy said ruminatively:

"I wish my children to be ladies at the table."

Mary squirmed in pleasant obedience, charmed with the word "ladies." But ethics flew right over Martha's head. Martha commenced to chase cold facts.

"Am I your child?" she asked intently.

No wonder Mrs. Kenealy somewhat lost patience. "Good gracious, Martha, what a question! Of course you and Mary are my children!"

"Oh, I knew Mary was," conceded Martha timidly.

If the spirit *really* showed in the face, transfiguring it, Martha at that moment would have made a dearly pretty picture. She loved her associates and ached to be loved in return. Her heart, which often throbbed with the uncomfortable feeling that she was doubtless a family outsider, reached radiantly out towards the hinted reassurance. However, she looked but her usual vacuous self, therefore her mother said impatiently:

"Eat your pudding."

Martha tractably began shovelling away with her spoon, and as she shovelled she accumulated belated qualms from which Mary had evidently completely recovered, for Mary was heartlessly gobbling down the babies with a tantalizing speech to each of "There *you* go; and there *you* go; and there *you* go." She was a true poet: true poets are always miraculously restored to calm by the last fatal blow which the bystanders have all been dreading. The fatality of such a blow is rather to the bystanders than to the victim. Mary had healthfully shrieked herself sane. But Martha, who had tried her best to keep symbolism out of the pudding, found herself, now that it had gotten in, under obligations to treat it hospitably, therefore she humanely gagged at each mouthful; and when she came to the last remaining infant she rocked it gently awhile in the cradle of the spoon, gazing at it with motherly wistfulness.

On the gift-wings of childhood, she flew away to the far country of her future, a sunny place whose fences were all down and whose

clocks had no bed-time on them, and where she walked around, unwatched, doing quietly just what she pleased. And she pleased chiefly to be kind to a plain, black-haired baby—her own. Among other things she told it that it was pretty and that straight hair was sweeter than curly.

"What is it?" exasperatingly demanded Mrs. Kenealy. She feared that Martha had found an insect in the dessert.

Martha, startled, explained herself: "I was thinking of a real child, all of my own. I'd like one. Where do they come from?"

Calmed to find that the spoon held a fancy, not a fly, Mrs. Kenealy lost interest and answered listlessly:

"From many places. If people have no children of their own—and want one" (Mrs. Kenealy's tone indicated that this *want* was a strained situation)—"why, they adopt a foundling." This is where she wanted to stop, but she plodded faithfully further, having long ago found out that undue wordiness on her part really saved time, forestalling questions as it did. "From an orphan asylum." . . . "A foundling is picked up somewhere." . . . "Orphans have n't any parents." . . . "Fathers and mothers." . . . "Asylum is the name of the—um—building."

"Huh!" breathed Martha heavily, rejecting the entire assortment. She wanted no foundling, like herself; she wanted the real thing, like Mary. Consequently she asked pointedly, "Where did you get Mary?"

At Mary's name, always a name to conjure with, Mrs. Kenealy came briskly to the surface and smiled vividly at the owner of the name, getting a livelier smile in return.

Martha, the Outsider, narrowed her eyes thoughtfully. She took it to be quite natural that *she* got no pretty smiles, not being a pretty smiler, but she wondered *why* she was n't a pretty smiler. That's what she could n't fathom. She had practised Mary's smile in front of the glass and had only succeeded in making slits in her face till it looked like a hallowe'en pumpkin. Some one was to blame. But who?

"Your birthday, Mary, is in June," commenced Mrs. Kenealy, addressing Mary by way of reply to Martha, who was suddenly out of affairs. But that was according to hard custom, too. Invariably, when Martha expressed a thirst for the waters of substantial knowledge, a cup of frothy fairy wine was pressed to the lips of Mary. "June, the rose month. Mother's flower-child, pink and precious. I found you in my heart's rose-garden, Mary."

Under the "delight of a sensation and herself the cause," Mary glowed excitedly and all but climbed upon the table in her eagerness to get nearer the source of glittering information. She made so pretty a picture even while she was smashing the requirements of etiquette that she was leniently allowed to remain. But had Martha elected to copy the

position, *she* would have made such a frog-like blot upon the damask landscape that she would have been ordered back to seemliness at once. Not only is beauty its own excuse for being, as the poetic sage informs us, but it is also its own pledge for pleasure, its guerdon for the same, and its own full pardon for sin,—the last a most convenient asset.

Mary was certainly a delightful child to romance with, for she not only looked the fairy partner to the life, but owned a complaisant mind which juggled joyously with the fine points of a tale and had no uncomfortable thought-twinges concerning the truth or falsity of the pleasant trifles it tossed about.

"From a rose-garden!" she twittered, in high soprano. "The rose-garden of your heart." Here her tiny voice ran the scale to a deep contralto croon which would have charmed juice out of sheet iron. "And that is why you love me!"

"Yes, my dearie."

"And why I love you," continued Mary, kissing her hand affably across the butter-dish. "In a rose-garden! I guess I was on a pink rose tree, shut in a pink bud with a white butterfly on it clapping its wings, and I guess too that I rocked around a lot before you went out and picked me and brought me in. And the butterfly came too, but turned into my guardian angel,—the thing that roosts on our beds at night—"

"'Watches,'" interpolated Mrs. Kenealy educationally.

Mary deftly caught the word and obediently ran back with it to put it in where she thought her mother wanted it. "The thing that roosts on our watches at night. A rose child! I must try to be sweet, must n't I?"

"Yes, indeed, dearie!" Mother and child were both nodding and laughing.

"And must bloom around in people's houses, to help them be glad!"
More bobs and nods.

"And must never, never, never let my thorns prick anybody!"
Mary was not being allegorical and altruistic; she was merely chasing the rose idea up all its beaming byways. "Whee! Is that why I am called Mary *Rose* Kenealy?"

"Yes, daughterkin!"

"Whoop!" Hugging her pleasures, Mary here overbalanced herself and by sheer accident resumed the decorum of her chair, from the panting depths of which she continued to exchange bobs and sparkles with her equally buoyant mother.

Stony with interest, Martha sat motionless as a statue, arm and spoon still stiffly extended. Sphinx-like, she had gloomed at the pretty scene, feeling hopelessly aloof from it. At mental battledore and shuttlecock she was no good. The feather-tipped things which Mary

and her mother could bat airily back and forth between them were totally beyond her powers.

When the rose-child toppled decently back into eclipse, Martha huffily sped a suspended query:

"And where did you get *me*?"

"Let me see," mused Mrs. Kenealy, beginning well by throwing Martha some glowing nods and smiles left over. She never knowingly treated her children differently. Indeed, her big sin was that she treated them the same, trying to force Martha up to the standard notch set by Mary, refusing Martha the needs and rights of her own peculiar disposition. To be sure, Mary's was the easiest to get along with. Mary—and she was not necessarily superficial thereby—was always transported with delight merely to float upon the surface of the pond of life, among its water-lilies; while the annoying Martha, delving below for roots, only too often fell out of her scow, so to put it, and got drenched and shocked and chilled,—to say nothing of scooping up mud. "Let me see," repeated Mrs. Kenealy, intending to provide Martha with some of the glories in which Mary weltered. "Your birthday is in August. So hot it was! We were all at the seaside. I got you on the seashore, Martha."

Instead of enthusing, Martha became so pauseful that she was actually sinister. A menacing influence straightway began to be felt by all three, as palpably as if it had blown coldly in like wind from an open window. Then, with black brows knit—

"Was the tide going out?" probed Martha distrustfully. Life and death were in her tone, particularly death.

"Oh, Martha, don't be silly!"

"I'm not; I'm only trying to find out about this." After a vain wait for the settling of the tide question, she flung another. "Was I dressed?"

"No. Yes. No!"

"No? It's good it *was* hot. Was I dead and thrown away?"

"Certainly not!" Mrs. Kenealy's tone had grown as hard and defensive as Martha's, and she insensibly reflected Martha's inky frown. It looked like a battle royal.

"Not thrown away," pondered Martha. "Then you had no business, had you, to touch me?"

"No business!"

"No. Perhaps I am some one else's. She may be running around there still, poor thing, trying to remember where she left me."

"Martha! Finish that raisin and let us get up!"

Obedying the voice of command, Martha bolted the fruit whole, but returned at once to the firing line.

"My name is n't Martha Seashore Kenealy!"

"Who said it was?"

Feeling convinced that either robbery, in the past, or deception, in the present, had been practised upon her, and lacking discreet words to express her mind upon these points, Martha warily returned to her pudding, painfully scraping imaginary grains of rice from the bottom of her saucer.

She scraped so long and so uselessly that the scraping eventually proclaimed itself as a process not of action but of thought.

"Well?" demanded Mrs. Kenealy finally and loudly.

In her jerk back to public life, Martha spilled a few words she would not voluntarily have parted with. She unfortunately said:

"I never know when you are telling truths or lies."

Here was occasion for wrath, indeed; and wrath plentifully appeared. Except for simian blinkings, Martha was without defenses.

"Employing a word so utterly rude!" came scathingly in conclusion of the long maternal tirade.

"What's the *unrude* word for lie?" stammered Martha, willing to substitute.

"There is none!"

Here was a ray of hope. "Then it was n't my fault!" cried Martha, seizing the ray. But as a life-line, the ray was rotten.

Her fall was banishment. "Leave the table, miss!"

If one stopped to trifle and dally with "miss," one found it to be the forerunner of frightful things; so Martha slid at once to the edge of her chair and dropped to the floor. Nor was she reluctant, or unready, to go. "I've finished lunch anyhow," she thankfully informed her mother, as she scudded for the haven of the door.

Judged by the sound of them, the words were certainly impudent; but down in the obscurity of the mental well in which they were conceived, they indicated a mere reasonable—not to say polite—endeavor to present the optimistic side of an otherwise thoroughly bad set-out.

Those on the upper outside edge of the well, however, cannot possibly know what goes on down below; they can only judge of the water by what comes up in the bucket.

And what had come up had been impudent. Therefore was Martha's banishment pronounced more permanent than at first intended.

"And remain upstairs by yourself for the entire balance of the day. Don't come where we are," prohibited Mrs. Kenealy, feeling a monster by reason of this shameful penalty of segregation.

The astonished Martha turned around and looked uncovetously at the unpleasant pair she was only too gladly leaving. "Why, I don't want to come where you are," she explained firmly. Then she properly disappeared.

That is why a doorway is a healthy position to assume in time

of family cyclones; healthy and convenient. One can stay and gaze at the accruing disasters so long as one is fascinated, yet one can escape before the exit can possibly get blocked. And one's tongue can work from a distance.

From the unseen retreat of the stairway, there boomed down upon the enemy a final, sullen, damaging shot.

"Mary started it—with the pudding. I never start anything. Mary always does—but nothing ever happens to *her*!"

Then victorious silence.

No. Nothing ever happens to the Marys. The poor Marthas!

Mrs. Kenealy was frightened. She thought her fright was for Martha's black future, but in reality it was for Mary's brightly obedient present. Dreadful for dear Mary to hear such impertinences! Had Martha been an only child, her mother might have had the lenity to treat that young person's terse statements as merely the expression of a single-minded literalness. But with Mary's biddable nature to protect and preserve, Mrs. Kenealy could not but consider Martha dangerous.

She brooded over the air and its awful contingencies for the remainder of the afternoon, hastening to confide ruefully in Mr. Kenealy when that rather unimpressed parent came home from the office, hungry.

"And, Fred," she concluded desperately, "tell me—what *am* I to do to make a better girl of her?"

Fred made a dutiful feint of finding the matter important. By way of conjuring up help, he agitated his hand in unselfish destruction through his handsome blond hair—Mary's hair, though less heavenly.

In due time he spoke. "Has n't Martha *always* been a Pill?"

"From her first breath!" tragically stated Mrs. Kenealy, thriftily exaggerating in order to call out the maximum of advice.

The oracle's face cleared magically. "Then *why* bother over her at this late date?"

Which masculinely settled it,—leaving the way unobstructed for supper to be announced.



THE CHRYSANTHEMUM

BY CLIFFORD HOWARD

LAST tribute of earth to the year's vesper glow;
A kiss of the summer flung out to the snow.
God's herald of winter; yet coming to bring
To the hearts of the faithful a promise of spring.

LOST—A TURKEY

By Elliott Flower

Author of "The Best Policy," "Slaves of Success," etc.

THE turkey was of such enormous size that I fear my reputation for veracity would suffer if I ventured to mention its weight. It was so big that the sight of it resulted in a temporary suspension of business in Kennedy's butcher-shop when Farmer Bissell brought it in, the customers and clerks all crowding about him.

In view of the sensation created, Farmer Bissell naturally expected Kennedy to make all haste to acquire title to it, but Kennedy not only made no offer, but said frankly that he did not want it. "Too big," he declared. "Fine turkey all right enough, but only a hotel or a restaurant could use it, and even they prefer smaller ones. Mine is a family trade, and you couldn't sell that turkey to a private family in a thousand years. No housewife would have a pan big enough to hold it."

There was a murmur of assent from the women present.

"I would n't take it as a gift," said one. "I'd have to buy a new pan and a new platter before I could do anything with it."

"The family would be sick of turkey before it was half used up," added another. "Hot turkey, cold turkey, turkey hash, turkey croquettes, turkey patties—nothing but turkey for a week."

"So you see," pursued Kennedy, "it would be of no use to me except to hang outside the shop as an advertisement, and I'd rather advertise with something that can be sold."

Farmer Bissell was disappointed. It had not occurred to him that he might have something too good for the market. He was turning away, with the intention of offering it to some hotel, when Kinlin, the cigar man, pushed his way through the crowd.

"Fine bird for a raffle!" commented Kinlin.

"Why, yes," agreed Kennedy; "that's just what it's good for. A fellow never thinks of anything but the size at a raffle."

"Just turns the whole problem over to his wife," put in one of the women, "and grumbles because she is n't tickled to death."

"How much?" asked Kinlin, turning to the farmer.

Bissell had mentally settled on a pretty stiff price, but he now real-

ized that his turkey was not the prize that he had previously considered it. In consequence, after a little bargaining, Kinlin was in a position to announce a grand raffle at his cigar store.

Dick Patton won the turkey, which was a sore disappointment to Kinlin and most of his patrons. Patton was a nice enough fellow, but he lived in a neighboring town, and one hates to see an outsider win from a score or more of local contenders. Furthermore, Patton gloated most unpleasantly.

"Great bird!" said Patton. "Too bad you can't keep it here. But I'll send you the wishbone to smell of, and I'll write you a nice long letter about how it tastes."

"If one of our boys had won it," remarked Kinlin regretfully, "we'd have had a spread for the whole bunch at Casey's restaurant."

"Sure you would," agreed Patton heartily, "but you didn't win it, so the spread's going to be at my house in Arlington. You people can have a nice little meeting to-morrow night about six o'clock and think of what we're doing to that turkey. I'm going to wire my wife it's coming, and tell her to invite some friends in to dinner."

"I hope it's too big for your oven," growled one of the disappointed local men.

"Don't you worry about that," returned Patten. "We have a big enough oven. But I'm glad you reminded me of the size, for it may call for a pan or something bigger than we've got. I'll mention it in my telegram to Kitty."

"Going to tote the turkey along on the train with you?" inquired Kinlin.

"Not me," answered Patton. "You won't find me making a holy show of myself on a railroad train with a turkey big enough to need a whole seat for itself. It goes by express, and I'll ship it now."

The problem of wrapping it up for shipment proved a difficult one, but he finally secured a heavy paper bag of sufficient size, put the turkey in it, tied the mouth of the bag with a stout string, and attached an address tag.

"That's how it goes to Kitty," he announced, as he started for the express office. "Too bad you boys can't do anything but imagine how good it is."

There was a painful silence for some time after he left, all minds being centred on the turkey that was so soon to pass in triumph to Arlington and provide a feast for Patton and his friends.

"It don't seem right," commented Bimmer gloomily.

"It would n't be so bad," suggested Balcom, "if he was n't so cocky about it. Dick is n't a bad fellow, but I don't like the way he tries to rub it in."

"Serve him right," said Kent, "if he lost that turkey."

"Why not make him lose it?" asked Kinlin.

"How?" Several spoke at once.

"Send an order to the express office for it," explained Kinlin.

"Bill Downey don't know his writing," Bill was the express agent.

"He would n't give it up," said Bimmer.

"Sure he would," insisted Kinlin. "Bill's easy. Say, it would be the greatest joke ever—Patton boasting about his turkey, inviting his friends in, getting a new pan and a new platter, and the turkey don't come. We'd be eating it over at Casey's restaurant."

The picture thus conjured up was so delightful that several members of the party began to show enthusiasm. Balcom, however, shook his head. "Won't do," he said. "We'd get ourselves in trouble, and Patton would be mad enough to put it all over us. Forgery of an order, larceny of a turkey, conspiracy—oh, he'd have us seven ways, and the turkey feast would show the whole thing up."

Gloom settled on the crowd, but Kent presently shot a ray of light into it. "We don't need to eat the turkey," suggested Kent. "We can put the joke on him without that. We'll get the winged elephant from the express office and ship it to Jack Driscoll at Arlington, and Driscoll will let it turn up before things get too warm—send it to Patton with our compliments just about the time his friends are showing up for dinner, he being busy turning handsprings about that time. He'll see where the joke comes in all right, but there won't be anything for him to do after the turkey is passed over to him."

"Fine!" cried Kinlin.

"He'll be running round in circles when the turkey don't show up," laughed Bimmer. "I can see him spinning like a top."

"And he'll get it when it's too late for dinner," added Kent. "Let's get busy on the order."

Patton, having business in Danburg, did not reach his home until the next morning, but he was in high spirits when he arrived.

"Get my wire?" he asked.

"Yes," answered his wife; "but I did n't get the turkey."

"What?"

"I bought the biggest pan and the biggest platter in town, but there's no turkey."

"Thunder!" ejaculated Patton.

"I asked the Dales and the Latshaws and the Conways to dinner, and there's no turkey."

"The deuce!" cried Patton.

"They're all coming," Mrs. Patton went on resignedly—"all except the turkey."

"We'll see about that!" roared Patton, rushing to the telephone. "If the express company has sidetracked that turkey anywhere it's going to have a damage suit on its hands." He got the express company on the wire, and this is what his patient wife heard: "Where's that turkey for Mrs. Patton? . . . What? . . . It was shipped from Danburg yesterday—a turkey as big as a house. . . . I tell you it was. I shipped it myself, and I ought to know. . . . It must have come. . . . Well, you get busy with Danburg and find out what's the matter. . . . No; telegraph. Do you think I want to leave the biggest turkey in Christendom lying around an express office? . . . Well, I'll pay for the telegram, but you find the turkey or there'll be things happening in your office that you won't like."

Patton was an excited and disgusted man when he turned away from the telephone. "It's an infernal outrage!" he declared. "These express companies are getting more careless every day. They've spoiled our dinner right now, for the turkey can't possibly be here before to-morrow if it's still at Danburg."

"Are you quite sure," asked Mrs. Patton, "that you really had a turkey?"

"Sure? Sure?" Patton's arms were waving frantically in the air. "I had a turkey that weighed a ton."

"You know, Dick," Mrs. Patton went on, "I always worry a little about you when you go to Danburg. I don't think your associates there are quite——"

"Oh, thunder!" Patton broke in. "You seem to think I saw that turkey in a glass of beer. I tell you, it was a real turkey, a tremendous turkey; I won it in a raffle, and——"

"Gambling," sighed Mrs. Patton.

"Gambling nothing!" roared Patton angrily. "A raffle is n't gambling."

"It's a game of chance," insisted Mrs. Patton, "and that's gambling. I'm not surprised the turkey has disappeared. No good ever comes of gambling, and this is a judgment——"

"Judgment be jiggered!" howled Patton, driven to frenzy by this addition to his woes. "It's the infernal stupidity of a ten-dollar clerk, backed up by the supreme indifference of a soulless corporation! But I'll make them sweat for it!"

"Meanwhile," pursued Mrs. Patton, her voice as gentle and even as always, "what are we going to do about dinner?"

"Do? Do?" repeated Patton. "Why, go out to the market and get something, of course. Did you think we could serve excuses in place of a turkey? We've got to get something else."

"Perhaps," mused Mrs. Patton, "I can return the pan and the

platter. I hope so. We'll never have any other occasion to use them, and it seems a shame to have to pay for things we——"

"Get dinner! Get dinner!" cried Patton. "That's all you've got to do now. I'll see to the turkey, and you can bet your last cent we'll have it for dinner to-morrow."

"I never bet," returned Mrs. Patton coldly, "and I hope you'll never, never go to Danburg again."

Patton, his feelings now beyond his power of expression, rushed out, slamming the door after him. He would have been even more disturbed had he heard his wife, a little later, explaining their unpleasant situation to a neighbor.

"You see," said Mrs. Patton placidly, "Mr. Patton thinks he won a turkey."

"Thinks?" repeated the neighbor. "Does n't he know?"

"We have n't got the turkey," was Mrs. Patton's puzzling reply.

Patton, meanwhile, was pounding along in the direction of the express office, incidentally muttering dire threats against the company. His predicament was of a nature to affect the temper of any man. A turkey dinner and no turkey! Friends coming, and nothing but a hard-luck story for their entertainment! It was doubtful if they would even believe it. Dale, he was sure, would insist that he had never won the turkey at all—that he had merely expected to win it, and had failed. Dale had all the characteristics of a man from Missouri, and nothing but the production of the turkey would convince him that there was any at all, or, if any, that it was as big as claimed. Conway would certainly join in the demand for proof, and Latshaw might be relied upon to insinuate that the turkey was so small and tough that he was ashamed to produce it. They would have great sport over that turkey. And it was all the express company's fault!

There was fire in Patton's eyes when he invaded the express office, and the agent made all haste to ward off the threatened explosion.

"That turkey——" began the agent.

"Yes, that turkey!" blustered Patton.

"We've heard from it," said the agent.

"Where is it?" demanded Patton.

"And it seems to me," the agent went on, "that you've got a lot of nerve to come around here making a fuss about it."

"I have?" The counter attack was so unexpected that it left him gasping.

"Yes, you. If anybody knows about that turkey, it's you. It was delivered to your messenger at Danburg."

"My messenger!" roared Patton, recovering from his momentary weakness. "I never sent any messenger; I took it to the express office myself."

"Yes, and then you sent a boy with a written order for it. The agent at Danburg says he's got the order."

"It's a forgery," declared Patton.

"Who would forge an order for a turkey?" asked the agent incredulously.

The question brought the problem home to Patton: Who would? It all hung upon the answer to that little query. Who would forge an order for a turkey? A man who merely wanted a turkey would hardly take that risk. Then who would?

"That bunch of Danburg sports is back of this," asserted Patton. "It's their idea of a joke, but I'll show 'em that joking's a bad business! Just let me get hold of that order, and I'll have somebody dead to rights! They were sore because I won it."

"What do you think they did with it?" asked the agent.

"Ate it, of course," answered Patton, and the mental picture so enraged him that he fairly danced about the express office.

"Well, I don't know," returned the agent thoughtfully. "You see, there was a package came from Danburg last night that looked to me like it might be a turkey. Was yours a big turkey?"

"Biggest ever raised," answered Patton.

"Maybe that was it," said the agent. "It was wrapped up mighty careful, but it looked to me like a turkey, only it was so all-fired big. It was addressed to Jack Driscoll."

"My turkey!" cried Patton jubilantly. "Driscoll is chummy with that bunch, and he's just the one they'd send it to. I'll get a search-warrant and go down to his house."

"Better make sure he's got it first," advised the agent.

Patton saw the wisdom of this, so he did a little scouting. But a turkey, even a big turkey, is not easily located after it has passed the door of a private residence, and it was afternoon before Patton made his first discovery. Then he merely learned that Kent was in town. It seemed probable that Kent had come to Arlington to enjoy the joke, but there was no evidence in this that Driscoll was in possession of the turkey. Kent, however, must know where the turkey was, and he would surely look up the man who had it.

Patton shadowed Kent. To look for the turkey where it was not would be to add to the hilarity of the jokers, so he must be sure. Kent, in time, met Driscoll, and it was clear that they had a topic of conversation that amused them greatly. After much laughter they started for Driscoll's home, Patton still following. Driscoll and Kent entered the house, remained about ten minutes, and then emerged by way of the cellar door, locking the door after them. They were both laughing, and Patton, now concealed behind a shed, caught an occasional word of their conversation. One of the words thus caught was "turkey."

"That's enough for me," Patton decided, and he went after a search-warrant.

It was now late in the afternoon, however, and Justice Peterson was not in his office. A telephone inquiry brought the information that he was not at home, either, which was discouraging but did not necessarily mean defeat, for Justice Peterson liked his occasional glass of beer and was also a well-known figure in one or two cigar stores.

"I'll get that turkey," Patton muttered angrily, "if I have to steal it." Then, before continuing his search for Justice Peterson, he telephoned his wife that he would bring the turkey home with him, just to prove that he had not lied about its size and weight.

"Then there really was a turkey," was her disconcerting reply, "or have you just bought one?"

The girl at Central warned him that he would be held for damages if he smashed the telephone.

Kent and Balcom had come to Arlington to see the fun. It was their intention to have the turkey delivered to Patton, with their compliments, while he was at dinner. They would also send with it some facetious message.

It occurred to Balcom, however, that he might get a little additional amusement out of the express office. Patton would look there for his turkey first, and he would be mad, mad, mad. It would be interesting to hear what the express agent had to say about it. Balcom knew the express agent, so he dropped in to see him.

"Say," exclaimed the agent the moment he appeared, "did any of you people up to Danburg ship a turkey down here? There's all kinds of — being raised over a lost turkey."

"Is there?" queried Balcom innocently.

"That's what there is!" the agent declared. "Dick Patton lost a turkey, and he thinks Driscoll got it."

"What?" Balcom was startled out of his air of nonchalance.

"I told him Driscoll got a package that looked like it might be a big turkey, and he was all for racing off after a search-warrant right away. Say, but he was mad!"

"Did he do it?" asked Balcom anxiously.

"Do what?"

"Get a search-warrant."

"Not right off, I guess. I told him he'd better make sure that Driscoll had the turkey first."

Balcom started at once for Driscoll's house to give the alarm, but an unexpected glimpse of Patton diverted him from this plan. He followed Patton, and was not long in learning that Patton was searching for Justice Peterson. He also learned, from a man with whom Patton

had talked, that the latter was making many dire threats, including a threat to go after that turkey himself if he could not get a search-warrant. And Peterson, according to this informant, was out of town.

Then Balcom hunted up Kent and Driscoll, and reported these new developments. "Better put the turkey somewhere else," he suggested.

"No," said Kent; "let him find it. That's the easiest way out, and we'll be on hand to give him the laugh."

"Looks to me like a sort of weak ending to the joke," objected Driscoll.

"Oh, I don't know," returned Kent. "If you're looking for something strenuous we might hold him up and take the turkey away—use handkerchief masks or something like that, you know."

"Not for me," declared Driscoll emphatically. "There will be murder committed if anybody tries to take that turkey after he once gets hold of it again. While I don't want a good joke to end up tame, I don't want it to get too boisterous either."

"Oh, well, we can decide what we'll do when he comes," remarked Kent. "We can tell better then what's the best play."

"Are you sure he'll come?" asked Driscoll.

"It's a cinch," declared Balcom. "He's got his mind made up to that already, if he can't get a search-warrant, and he can't get one to-night."

Driscoll allowed these counsels to prevail, but he was unusually silent and thoughtful as they proceeded in the direction of his house, and no sooner were they ensconced behind the shed that had previously sheltered Patton than he decided that he would view the proceedings from inside the house. "I don't want him smashing anything," he explained, "so I'll slip in and unfasten a cellar window. We can give him the laugh when he is crawling out with the turkey. Perhaps I can slip up behind him and grab his legs."

Kent and Balcom agreed to this, and Driscoll left them.

They had not long to wait for their victim. Hardly more than fifteen or twenty minutes had elapsed when Patton, having failed to find the justice, came himself for the turkey. He approached cautiously in the gloom, crept to the cellar door, found it locked, moved stealthily to a window, tried that, found it unlocked, opened it, glanced furtively about, and then wriggled through it backward to the floor.

"Now we've got him," laughed Balcom.

"And I'm going to try for that turkey," declared Kent, tying his handkerchief over the lower part of his face. "It won't be any trick at all to get it while he's crawling out through the window."

"Especially if Driscoll grabs his legs," added Balcom, also producing a handkerchief. "I'm with you. But he'll go to the police sure."

"And tell them he had a turkey stolen while he was climbing out

of the window of another man's house!" retorted Kent scornfully. "I guess not. But even if he does, there won't be anything but a laugh on him. *We'll take that turkey from Patton and deliver it to Mrs. Patton.*"

"Fine!" cried Balcom.

And then, suddenly, a rough hand descended on his shoulder and a rough voice said, "I got ye." Turning quickly, he confronted a man with brass buttons and a revolver. "Don't git gay now," cautioned the policeman. "I'll be after takin' yer pal whin he crawls out."

The policeman's revolver was awe-inspiring, and Kent was as safely a prisoner as if his coat collar were also in the grasp of the law. But he tried to explain. "It's only a joke, Mr. Officer," he said.

"Sure it's a joke—on you," agreed the policeman.

"We're friends of Mr. Driscoll," persisted Kent.

"An' do ye go callin' with yer faces covered?" asked the policeman.

They hastily pulled their handkerchiefs away. "It does look bad," Kent admitted, "but Driscoll will tell you it's all right."

"An' him jist telephonin' the station that burglars was breakin' into his house!"

"What!"

"They sint me up hot-foot to nab the burglars," said the policeman, "an' I done it."

This evidence of treachery was so amazing that they were staggered, and before they had recovered their wits Patton's head was faintly discerned at the cellar window. It was evident he was having some difficulty getting out, the window being some distance above the floor. He shoved the turkey out first.

"Caught with the goods," gloated the policeman; then to his prisoners, "Mind ye step lively to what I say while I'm gettin' yer pal."

Keeping them with him, he made a flank movement that brought him close to the squirming figure in the window before he was noticed. "Hands up!" he ordered, which was certainly a difficult order for a man in Patton's position to obey. Moreover, Patton gave no heed to it, being at the moment suddenly absorbed in what was happening behind him. "Let go! Let go!" he yelled, and the movement of his body showed that he was making frantic efforts to kick some unseen person.

"Come out of that!" ordered the policeman.

"I can't," cried Patton. "Somebody's holding my legs."

"Grab him," said the policeman, turning to Kent and Balcom, "an' pull him out, an' mind I'm watchin' ye!"

The policeman's revolver being unpleasantly conspicuous, they made haste to obey, but it was immediately evident that Patton spoke truthfully when he said somebody had hold of his legs. Their united efforts failed to bring him through the window, although it occasioned

him much bodily discomfort. "Quit it! You're breaking me in two!" he complained.

"Pull him out! Pull him out!" commanded the policeman.

They made one supreme effort, and just at that moment the man inside released his legs, with the result that he came so suddenly that he and Kent and Balcom found themselves in a struggling heap on the ground.

"Untangle yerselves an' stand up!" ordered the policeman.

While they were doing this the smiling face of Driscoll appeared at the cellar window, but the smile vanished when he grasped the situation. "You've made a mistake, officer!" he cried. "You've got two friends of mine."

"I caught 'em with masks on," declared the policeman.

"Oh, that was a joke."

"Was it?" asked the policeman sarcastically. "I don't hear ye laughin'."

Driscoll now climbed out and joined the party, and he was further disturbed to find that he did not know the policeman. He knew most of them, and it had not occurred to him that they might send one he did not know. That seemed to make it advisable to clear the affair up quickly. "It's all right, officer," he explained. "The whole thing's a joke."

"It's no joke," said the policeman, "whin ye catch a felly with the goods on. I'm thinkin' ye belong to the gang yersilf."

"Me!" cried Driscoll. "Why, I live here."

"That's what ye say," returned the policeman, "but ye better come to the station an' tell the sergeant about it."

Protestations and explanations availed nothing, and they presently found themselves marching down the street ahead of the policeman. Driscoll was not even permitted to prove his identity by calling members of the household.

"Nice mess you've made of it," grumbled Kent.

"I did n't intend he should get *you*," explained Driscoll, "and I thought he'd be a man I knew."

"Well, he is n't," retorted Kent. "Do you know the sergeant?"

"No-o," answered Driscoll.

"Then," said Kent, "if he's as witless and unreasonable as this copper, we're up against a hard proposition."

Patton, listening, let his face relax into a smile as he heard this.

The guests had arrived, and Mrs. Patton was explaining that she expected her husband home any minute. He had had some trouble about the turkey, she said. She did not know exactly what the trouble was, but no turkey had come, and he had gone out to see about it. She

knew he had found it, because he had telephoned about an hour before that he would bring it home with him.

The telephone bell interrupted her. Patton was at the other end of the line.

"Come right home," she instructed, as soon as she recognized his voice. "It's awfully impolite of you——"

"Oh, cut it out!" he broke in roughly. "Is Conway there?"

"Yes, but——"

"Tell him to come down and identify me. The sergeant says he knows Conway."

Mrs. Patton, with some reason, decided that her husband must be suffering from mental aberration, but she had the presence of mind to ask where he was.

"The police station," he answered.

"Oh, Dick," she cried, "what have you been doing?"

He declared, with much warmth, that he had been doing nothing.

"And the turkey?" she asked.

"I have it here."

"Did—did you steal it, Dick?" she faltered. "Is that the trouble?"

Patton controlled himself with an effort, and his face was flushed when he turned away from the telephone.

"Is he coming?" asked Kent anxiously.

The question seemed to recall to Patton some momentarily forgotten purpose. The flush died out and he regarded Kent coldly. "I don't see how that concerns you," he said.

"Why—why, Conway will get us out of this, won't he?" exclaimed Kent, startled.

"Why should he?" returned Patton in even tones. "Conway does n't know any one of you."

"But he knows you, and you know us!" expostulated the three.

Patton looked them over, each in turn, and then shook his head. "You are all strangers to me," he said.



CYNICISMS OF AN OPTIMIST

No woman is as old as she looks—in the morning.

A vegetarian widower and a grass widow should be well-mated.

Men and women are thrown together a good deal in New York—especially on the Subway trains!

The married man is afraid of but one woman, the bachelor is afraid of all women. Who is the greater coward?

Walter Pulitzer

LOVE AND A MORNING RIDE

By Elizabeth Maury Coombs



"**A** NYBODY can go to ride with me that wants to," said the old gentleman, with a badly assumed air of indifference.

"I really can't resist the cordiality of your invitation, suh!" answered the girl, laughing as she jumped off the horse-block and took a bridle from the peg beside it. Going to the pasture fence, she called enticingly in the whistling coo that horses know so well and regard so little, to a sorrel gelding with a white star in his forehead. By way of response he threw up his head, tossed his mane, and galloped off.

Throwing down the bridle, she stole up, and, hooking her fingers in his forelock, led him quietly up to it; then saddled him while he danced sideways, and, mounting from the ground, rode off after the old gentleman, whose bay mare was quietly ambling along the road that led to the Blue Ridge Mountains, rising peak on peak in front of them.

"Grandfather," said the girl, as she caught up with him, "you know Uncle Nelson says this horse loves your mare."

"Yes, I knew Nelse was a mighty big fool, even for a nigger. You know he came to me with your grandmother's niggers," remarked the old man casually.

"He says," went on the girl, not heeding the interruption, "that even in the pasture, Chaos"—patting his shining sorrel neck—"does n't let his heels fly at Panzita, and you can often hear the other horses squeal when he bites at them for coming too near her ladyship. You notice yourself how nicely they go together, even if he is a pacer and she goes at a fast rack. I've seen many a married couple who had the same difference in gait," observed the girl, suppressing her laughter as she saw the old man shut his lips with a slight snap at this last bit of pleasantry.

"Chaos can open any granary door on the plantation. Uncle Nelson says so himself; and you know, Gramps, there always has to be *one* of a couple who can open the granary door."

"Oh, yes, my child, I know that, but"—with a sub-acid smile—"it's a little apt to be a woman's accomplishment."

"Not when it happens to be some one else's granary, Grandpapa," cooed the girl, with a gurgling laugh.

"You caught me that time, Miss Pert; but I don't care to be regaled with any more of Nelse's conversation this morning. And why all this talk of love? I'm not in love myself," said the old man, with a quizzical side glance from under his bushy white eyebrows at the girl's now blushing cheek, as she looked away at the foothills with elaborate pretense.

"Besides, Nelse had better be using his curry-comb on this mare"—flecking a bit of dust from its mane—"instead of filling your head with fool notions of love between the lower animals. Love does not exist in them any more than in the lower classes. Love, fiddlesticks!" he grumbled half to himself.

"Let's talk of the crops," he vouchsafed after a while, in more mollified tone. "It's getting nearly time to plant corn. Your eyes are younger than mine—are those oak leaves the size of a squirrel's foot yet?"

"Yes, Grandpa, just about," answered the girl, glancing up at the big tree under which they were passing, with its lacework of pinky-grey outlined against the unclouded sky.

"Well, well, I must tell Nelse to plow the big rye field to-morrow if this weather holds," he said; then relapsed into the whispering silence of old age, while the girl, as her horse snorted at the smell of damp earth, noticed on the gray-white road the young oak leaves beaten down by last night's storm, and reminding her still of the old man's simile of the squirrel's little pinky velvet paws upturned with appealing pointed fingers before they withered at the warm breath of the west wind.

"Hush, Grandpa," said she in lowered tone, as the horses paused at the clear little creek to drink. "See, my Lord the Cardinal has chosen a suburban residence in that leaning apple-tree as a fitting one for his rusty wife!"

"Oh, I see him," whispered the old gentleman hoarsely, "sitting on that swinging limb, swayed by his own eloquence."

"As many a less golden-tongued orator has been before him!" the girl put in.

"Clearly 't is an after-dinner speech," again she said in underbreath, leaning from her saddle that her low tone might penetrate the dulled ear of age. "I know from her absorbed-in-eggology air that she knew the point long and long ago!"

"But it used to be a mighty funny joke during the honeymoon," sighed the old man rather bitterly.

"But so might Webster's Unabridged Dictionary be—during the honeymoon," smiled the girl; and then in a moment added, "Now

he darts away! Hear the flutter of his wings, and who would have thought that last liquid note of love could have been changed to such a shriek of vengeance at the imaginary insult of a fellow-congressman!

"What do you suppose love means to them, Grandfather?" breathed the girl, with a far-off look in her velvet eyes.

"Bugs and worms, my dear," retorted the old man decisively; then ended, "A man finds in life, my child, the echo of his thought. A woman hears in it only the reflected flutterings of her own foolish heart!"

They turned their horses' heads aside to climb the steep opposite bank of the little mountain stream, as the red-bird coming back to his nesting tree spread his wings out flat and fell, wind-wavered and silently like a red autumn leaf, and was lost in the drifting snow of apple bloom.

"Grandfather," said the girl, as their horses took the hill, "who lives in that little cabin we can always see in the clearing away up on the mountain-side? See? That one"—taking his hard old, knotty hand in hers, firm and white as moulded wax, and pointing with his forefinger. "The one with that fringe of blooming dogwood in front of the black pine grove."

"A man I used to know lives there, my child, but it is a long story, and maybe your mother would n't like you to hear it."

"Oh, yes, she would, Gramps, because if it's a *bad* story she can always point a moral with it. So go on quick, now, before you forget the naughtiest points!"

"Well, to begin in the middle and end at the beginning, as all stories do these days, you remember that my Aunt Betsy and my Uncle Richard, being single folk, went on a memorable trip to Europe—let's see—it must be over fifty years ago?"

"Oh, yes, I remember it *well*," mocked the girl laughingly. "It was the summer I had my white padusoy made and snagged my green lace bombazine on the garden fence! Well, go on, Grandfather."

"So I will when you behave yourself, Miss. You know we had only recently come from France in those days, and my poor Uncle Richard was taken with a fever in Paris. He was buried there, poor fellow, in the tomb of his forefathers in the Père la Chaise. Then my aunt, returning in deep distress, was much befriended in England by some family connections—*only* connections, no blood kin, my dear child—remember that point! Their young son was shortly after visiting in the colonies (as we were then called), and my aunt asked him to come and spend the winter at her house, the climate of Virginia being thought vastly well of in those days.

"Well, he came," continued the old man, searching round in his memory for half-buried details, "and a charming young fellow he was; a fine dancer," recollected the old gentleman with a half-smile, "a hard rider, a deep drinker; and yet, withal, he had the well-bred Englishman's vivid sense of honor. He left in the coming spring-time. We young fellows—there were half a dozen of us at that time, mighty well pleased to be in each other's company—relied on his promise of return; but in the summer my aunt failed rapidly, so that the following winter, her health being bad, she did not entertain much, and he did not come back.

"I remember—'t was such a day in May as this—old Tunch, her coachman, a ginger-cake nigger and a good field hand in his time, came riding up on one of my aunt's Morgan carriage mares (a fine mare, broad in the back and short-coupled between the front and hind-quarters), and his saying to my father at the back door: 'Ole Miss was found dead this mornin', Marster. 'T wuz Charity'—her maid—'as found her, Marster, sayin' her pra'rs by her bed; like Gord A'mighty keered fo'pence ha'penny whether er 'oman ez good ez ole Miss ever said any pra'rs er not!' as he brushed his old eyes with the back of his coat sleeve.

"Well, after everything was settled up and the estate divided, my father's share proved to be the darkies; and as my father was overstocked with niggers at that time he sent for old Tim Maloney, the Irish auctioneer, and a mighty successful man, too, by reason of his jokes with the crowd, and told him to put his aunt's house servants on the block at July Court. My father was sorry to do this, but he could n't see his way to use any but the corn-field niggers then. So Maloney put a notice in the *Gazette*, and July Court day was a swinger, I tell you! We young fellows were grouped under a locust tree in the court-house square, and the heavy, hot smell of those locust blooms comes back to me now; and above the zoonin' of the bees about them the tones of old Tim Maloney's voice like a saw, joking with the crowd, when we saw come riding up Eric Vernon, the young Englishman, on Gray Statesman, as good a horse as ever wore an iron shoe!

"He had come quite a way and hard, for the yellow flakes of foam were dropping from Statesman's neck and flanks, and the good horse hung down his head nearly to the ground, as Vernon slipped the rein over his arm and joined us. We had hardly time to greet him, and he to express his sorrow at my aunt's death, before the auction began.

"Vernon's face was deeply flushed but set like a mask—with fatigue, I thought. Well, the first negro put up was my aunt's old coachman, Tunch. The bidders were backward, for Tunch was well gone in years. Maloney began to help things up with his jokes, and Tunch had gone up nearly to eight hundred—all my father really expected from him—

when a fool overseer stepped out from the crowd and, taking a pinch of the skin on the darky's neck between his finger and thumb, pulled it out nearly a half yard, it looked to me! That showed his real age, and the crowd yelled as he was knocked down at eight hundred. Tim leaned over and whispered to my father something. At first he hesitated, then consented, and Tim put up a young negro wench, Circe, by name, incidentally by nature too, I judge. She was a cream-colored octoroon. None of your kinky-headed niggers would my aunt let wait in her house, and her hair was brown and curly and hung round her like a cloak, the color of the silk of ripening corn.

"She stood there in the blazing July sun, and the noise of the crowd waked the baby at her breast. He rubbed his eyes with his doubled up fists, then lifted up his heavy lids, and his lashes looked half of an inch long as he raised them and looked at us; and his eyes"—here the old gentleman paused and, slapping his knee, enunciated slowly—"and his eyes, my child, were as blue as the sky!"

The old man paused in the half forgetfulness of age and mumbled dreamily to himself.

"Go on, Grandfather," murmured the girl, but so low he scarcely seemed to hear, for when he went back to the story he seemed half forgetful of her, and talked murmuringly as if to some one in the past.

"Yes, suh," he quavered, "it all comes back to me. When she was put up Will Nicholas turned to us with a sneer in his laugh, and says he, 'Well, gentlemen, that's what I call a tempting piece of meat!' and a man in the crowd said half aloud, 'Yes, I reckon so, to a young dog like yourself.' With that Will stepped out and held up his five fingers. She had been started at three hundred by my father. And Eric Vernon, like a man in a dream, said in a loud tone, 'Six hundred.' The woman on the block turned at the sound of his voice, and she smiled like the sun coming from under a cloud, while the big tears rolled down her cheeks. You know those mulattoes really bear a faint resemblance to people at times. Then Preston Page, seeing the young bloods bidding against each other, stepped out with a thousand-dollar offer, and Nicholas, whose pocket-book was longer lived than his temper, said hotly, 'Fifteen hundred!' and Tim Maloney was as near heaven as he ever got to be, to see a parcel of block-heads bidding like that on a shiftless house-nigger that could span her own waist with four fingers like any fine lady!

"Vernon put up another hundred, and Nicholas went him one better. Vernon turned, and it's been fifty long years, but I can see the look in his eyes—set in his head like those of a man on the rack, as he put out his hand like he would ward off a blow, and said: 'Gentlemen, gentlemen, do not bid against me! The child is my child, and the woman in the sight of God is my wife!'

"We said nothing for a full minute, then Nicholas turned with an oath and a sneering curl of his cruel lip and said, 'Gentlemen, I, for one, feel myself *de trop* at this family reunion. It's cooler at the tavern.' We never cast a glance at Vernon, and he knew it was the end as we turned and left him alone."

"Alone in the prison house of his honor!" murmured the girl, almost too low for her tones to be caught by the old gentleman.

"Eh? What did you say, my dear? Ah, yes, alone in that vulgar, jeering crowd."

"I wondered idly," resumed the old man, after a silence, "who had bought the old deserted cabin on the mountain-side, and a month or so after heard it had been sold to Vernon. For fifty years he has lived there, my child, and none have seen him; but every evening about six I look toward the mountain and see the blue smoke wreaths curling from his cabin go up, up in the still air. Sometimes it seems," mused the old man, "to reach *almost* to the door of heaven."

"Ascending like a prayer," murmured the girl at his side, "of reparation for wrong, and in the sight of men the eternal smoke of incense floating up from the altar of perfect love."

"Love, my dear Lois," snapped the old man, as he abruptly turned his horse's head homewards, "is a name one can apply to passion only where it exists in the very best society!"



TO MR. RUDYARD KIPLING

BY WALTER S. TRUMBULL

H O, Rudyard, smite yer bloomin' lyre
 An' sing for us another song.
 The only thing wot we require
 Is, you don't keep us waitin' long.

We 'ear from others day by day,
 An' some is good—but wot they do
 Ain't got the swing o' "Mandalay";
 So won't you let us 'ear from you?

Of late you 'ave n't wrote no rhyme,
 An' every poet-lovin' cuss
 Is spendin' more than 'alf 'is time
 A list'nin' for you—same as us.

THE SIGHT OF THE SOUL

By Helen Talbot Porter

"LYDIA, you must not work any more to-night. The light is so very poor, dear, and you know the oculist warned you against any extra strain."

"But, Harry, I have nearly finished. See, there is only a few hours' work and then it will be done. Yes, my eyes do smart, but, oh, do let me just paint this little shadow. Then I will stop, and after dinner you can read to me. I will shut my eyes and rest them for to-morrow. In a few days it will be finished."

She threw her brushes down, and put her hands on her husband's shoulders, her face radiant. "Harry, the gold medal and the five thousand dollars—nothing less for you and me!"

He kissed her tenderly. "I wish you had stopped earlier to-day, Lydia. The doctor said your eyes were in a critical condition. I don't want to croak, but you must not run risks with them."

The woman laughed. "They will last long enough for me to finish this picture, Harry, and then I will give them a long, long rest."

They stood together looking at the beautiful canvas. "Do you like it?" she asked.

"It is wonderful! When it is finished I believe it *will* receive the gold medal, Lydia."

"I'll stop now, for your sake, only I shall have to work all the harder to-morrow. This picture is part of me, Harry. I know every line, every feature, of that face; but it's the color I love the best. Sometimes when I paint a shade, a tone that is just right, it hurts me, as if I got a breath from Heaven, too strong for my mortal breast."

She washed the brushes carefully, standing them handles down in a great green jar, then turned back to the picture. "God bless it!" she whispered, smiling.

No one but Harry Drayton knew what this picture meant to Lydia. Ever since the terrible day two years before, when he had been stricken; when he, the sculptor, had wakened to find both arms paralyzed, Lydia Drayton had worked without ceasing.

And yet her pictures had not sold. There was great sweetness in their conception and wonderful handling of color, but though the critics

had praised and the public had applauded, week by week the money laid aside for a "rainy day" had been spent, and the "rainy day" continued when there was nothing left.

His arms were better now, and he could use them a very little; indeed, there was hope that he might be cured, but the physicians insisted on a trip to Germany for baths and treatment as the only chance of complete recovery.

They had looked at each other in silent despair, more bitter because of the new hope that must be put aside; for they were already deeply in debt.

Then came the night when Lydia had wakened him with a cry of joy. "Harry, Harry, I will win the gold medal and the five thousand dollars at the Centennial Exhibition of the Academy! I will win them, win them," she repeated, "for you and me. The eyes of my soul have seen a picture, a wonderful picture, and I will paint it. It came like an inspiration. I can see it even when my eyes are closed, and I want to kneel down and give thanks, for it is beautiful."

At first Harry Drayton had not dared believe in her power to do this thing, dared not let himself hope. He had fought a good fight, had overcome the irritable impatience that had held him in its unrelenting grasp when first he became helpless, and had conquered the depression, the morbid desire to die. Then at length cheerfulness had come, and courage, so that his friends sought him out, not in charity, but for the pleasure he gave them. He knew this and was glad.

He recognized that this was no ordinary picture. There was a subtle power in it that was never felt in Lydia's work before. He began to plan for the future. He could feel again the beloved clay that had moulded into beautiful things at his touch.

Every afternoon he came into the studio, and they would stand together looking at the great canvas, breathless with the hope in their hearts.

But now Lydia's eyes were failing.

They were reading Dickens again. Harry Drayton read well, and Lydia sank into an arm-chair, closing her eyes. "It must be something light and cheery, dear, for my head does ache," she acknowledged wearily, but she did not see the look of anxiety that crossed her husband's face.

"Then we will read Sam Weller's valentine."

Mr. Pickwick was making one of his inimitable suggestions when Lydia sat up suddenly in her chair. "Harry," she cried in an agony of fear, "has the lamp gone out? Tell me, quick, did it go out just then? And you were reading when I opened my eyes."

The book clattered to the floor as he sprang to her.

"Quick, Harry, tell me that it did go out—tell me the room is black to you too!"

Stroking her hair gently, he tried to comfort her. "Don't worry, darling; just keep your eyes shut awhile. They need rest; they will be well again soon." He hardly knew what he was saying, but the calmness of his voice lessened her terror.

"But I can see nothing, nothing! Oh, Harry, save me from this!" she pleaded. "You do not answer! Then it is true—don't tell me—now I understand—I am blind—I am blind!"

Slipping from him, she sank down on the floor, covering her face with her hands. "I must not cry, Harry; it will make them worse. Oh, Harry, must we have this too?" and he comforted her with caresses that hid the hopeless bitterness of his own heart.

The oculist shook his head when she told him wistfully of the picture and the coming exhibition, for every test had been futile; not even a ray of light penetrated into the black night of her exhausted eyes.

"But do not be discouraged," he said kindly. "It is rest you need, Mrs. Drayton, perfect rest, without nervous excitement or shock of any kind. I have every hope that in a few months you will see again."

Harry Drayton went back to the doctor that afternoon.

"She must not be discouraged," the oculist said again, "but in a case of this kind, the least nervous excitement or sudden shock may make the patient permanently blind. It is hard to exact such caution, but on no account let her be startled or agitated."

"But the picture, doctor! It is the Centennial celebration. Every American artist of standing will be an exhibitor. Such an exhibition has never been given in all the history of American art." But the physician only shook his head.

"It is one more of the inexplicable disappointments that make life hard to understand. I——"

"But," the man interrupted eagerly, "she will be able to paint again?"

"Yes, I am almost sure of that. I believe her eyes will be as keen as ever, if she will only give them the perfect rest they need."

Lydia bore the long days patiently. "Remember what the doctor said, Harry. I can wait, dear."

It seemed as if they had never lived so close together as in these days, and yet neither of them ever spoke of the picture.

"I have one comfort, Harry," she would say, smiling in her old, bright way: "the eyes of my soul still see color. While I sit here I can see all the colors of God's world with the eyes of my soul—crimson,

rose, emerald, and wonderful blue and brown! They are almost more beautiful than when I saw them with my poor tired eyes."

But as the time for the exhibition drew near she became restless—not complaining, but Harry Drayton knew her sorrow was almost greater than she could bear.

Night after night she would slip out of bed and pace up and down the room, and then he would quiet her with his loving sympathy, glad that she did not see that he too had grown haggard and old under the strain of their disappointment.

One night he awoke with an intense desire to see the picture. Stealthily, lest he disturb her, he made his way out of their room over to the studio, lighting the small lamp and pulling the easel into the middle of the room. Poor as the light was, he was struck anew with the beauty of the composition, the magnetism of the central figure.

But Lydia could not finish it in time!

In utter hopelessness, he dropped into a great chair, bowing his head in his hands.

Wearily he raised his head; he had been asleep! But now he was surprised by a slight rustle near him, and, turning, saw Lydia standing before the easel, her palette in hand. She was painting, painting with swift, decided strokes.

His horrified eyes took in every detail. Standing there in her pale kimono, her cheeks flushed, her brown hair in confusion, her white feet tucked into sandals stepping softly to the canvas, then back, as if to get a better view, she worked as he had seen her work all these years, but her eyes were tightly closed.

His impulse was to rush to her and stop her before she had ruined the picture, but the doctor's words rang loud in his ears: "She must not be startled, or have the least shock. It might mean the total loss of her sight." He sank back. With difficulty he kept from groaning aloud.

It was all too late now, and in miserable fascination he watched the lithe figure move to and fro, lifting up the twisted tubes, smoothing the palette with the knife, using the brushes deftly.

Would she never stop? His silence now was a bitter price to pay, and yet, whatever the cost, it was for Lydia's sight.

Now and then she muttered to herself, eager, impetuous sentences: "With the eyes of my soul! The gold medal, Harry—God knows I have worked for it! Five thousand dollars—for you, dear!"

The gray dawn stole silently upon them. There was the hum of the awakening city, but, unheeding, the woman painted on. Suddenly she threw down the brushes. "It is finished," she cried in ecstasy; and then a heart-breaking wail, "and I am blind!"

Her palette slipped from her fingers, striking the floor sharply.

Lydia Drayton's eyes opened, she put out her hands and felt a table—unfamiliar—when she felt that she should be in her bedroom.

"Harry," she called, "where am I, where are you?"

In an instant his arm was around her. "Here I am, dear; you wandered into the studio;" and he led her back to the other room, but the lithe step was gone, and into her face had returned the patient, listening expression of the blind.

Then like a flash her countenance was radiant again. "Harry, I had a glorious dream. I dreamed I could see my picture—oh, Harry, I dreamed I finished it! I held the paint-brushes and the palette and saw all the colors I love and mixed them and finished my picture for the exhibition. I think I know the joy that angels feel, for it was greater than human happiness. I never expect to feel that joy again until I get to Heaven."

A shadow swept the radiance away. "It is dark now, Harry; the thick darkness that you feel and cannot see; but God was good to give me such a dream. I have tasted unutterable joy, and seen wonderful things with the eyes of my soul."

It was not long before she fell asleep, but Harry Drayton did not go back. "Coward!" he called himself, but he would not look at the picture, so nearly completed, now daubed and ruined by the very hand that had made it beautiful. How could he ever tell her!

After breakfast he dragged himself to the studio. There was the sickening smell of a lamp burned out, and he hastily opened the windows. Despising himself for his hesitation, he walked deliberately to the easel and faced the canvas.

His head reeled. Was he mad? The glorious eyes still met his with thrilling mysticism—the picture stood unharmed, unchanged.

He picked up the palette—it was clean as when Lydia had laid it down that other day. He glanced at the paint tubes—she had not removed the caps, and the strokes of the clean brushes, guided delicately by a master-hand, had not left a single blemish.

In the shock of sudden relief, he stood motionless, looking into the depths of the wonderful picture. As by a revelation, all doubt vanished: unfinished, just as it was, he knew Lydia Drayton had created a masterpiece.

That day he sent it to the exhibition.

When they gave her the gold medal and the prize, she held them both for a moment close to her heart. Then, smiling, she touched her husband's hand. "The check is yours, Harry. Take it, dear. But, Harry, the Gold Medal belongs to the soul of Lydia Drayton."



MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

By Thomas L. Masson

Author of "The Von Blumers," "A Corner in Women," etc.

APPLEGATE paused over his soup, as if the idea had suddenly occurred to him.
"By Jove!" he exclaimed. "I forgot to tell you, but I met Trimmer and his wife to-day. They have just come in from the West. They are staying at the Park Avenue Hotel."

"Trimmer?" repeated Mrs. Applegate.

"Don't you remember Trimmer? He used to be my classmate and chum at college. Went west, married, and settled down. Why, I think more of Trimmer than of any other man in the world. Was n't it great, his coming on? Of course he was going to look me up, and I just happened to run across them in a car. My, but I was glad to see Trimmer!"

Mrs. Applegate went on calmly with her soup. She was glad about the Trimmers, of course—glad that her husband had experienced a sense of pleasure in meeting old friends; but she was glad in a sort of impersonal way, just as one might feel when some one we know of distantly recovers from a fever or has a sum of money left him.

"Did you call up that lamp man?" she asked, changing the subject. "I hope you did, because we must have that lamp fixed before——"

"I forgot all about it. Sorry. But, you see, the Trimmers put me out of everything. By the way, we must have them around to dinner. How would, say, next Thursday do?"

Mrs. Applegate regarded her husband with slightly elevated eyebrows. She knew of course precisely what had happened. She knew that her husband *had* invited the Trimmers to dinner on Thursday, and was now floundering around trying to lead up to it in a decent way, so as not to have any "trouble" with her. For Applegate, although a too enthusiastic gentleman about some things, always hated "trouble" with his wife.

"Why did you ask them without consulting me?" she said quietly. "And what makes you think that Mrs. Trimmer will come, without an

invitation from me? Of course she *may*. She's from the West, is n't she?"

Applegate began to find himself getting warm with anger. All his finest feelings, his long-smouldering but none the less acute friendship, had been trampled on. Besides, here was an insinuation against his friend and his friend's wife.

"The case is perfectly simple," he replied, controlling himself admirably. "Certainly Mrs. Trimmer would not come without an invitation from you. When you see her you will doubtless appreciate the fact that she has nothing to learn from the East in the way of etiquette. What I did was merely to suggest that they set aside next Thursday, and that I would have you write her an invitation, or possibly drop in at the hotel and see her, before that time."

"And you expect me to do this?"

"I most certainly do! Trimmer is the oldest friend I've got. I count it a great privilege to entertain him and his charming wife."

Mrs. Applegate was by no means an unpleasant person. Indeed, she was as popular as any one in her set. But she had, on this occasion, been approached in the wrong manner. If she had been along with her husband when he ran across the Trimmers, she would have instantly and charmingly invited them to dinner on her own account. But the fact that he had taken the thing into his own hands, and, added to this, the fact that he seemed to take pains to praise his friend's wife rather unnecessarily, set Mrs. Applegate the wrong way.

"You shouldn't have assumed anything at all until you had seen me," she said. "I have something to say about it. I am not going to be dragged into an affair like this without knowing about it beforehand."

Applegate bit his celery savagely. He did not propose to compromise. This was one of those occasions when he was mad clean through.

"All right," he replied. "Do as you please. I won't have them here. I'll take them out to dinner on my own hook, and I guess I can give them a good time. I'd rather entertain my friends in my own home, of course, but perhaps it is just as well, after all, that I should have them in a place where they are likely to be subjected to the least possible annoyance."

Mrs. Applegate, on her part, evidently felt that any reply would be beneath her dignity. The rest of the meal was eaten in silence. Shortly after, Applegate went out to his club, and the next morning early he went to business without seeing his wife.

At noon he had an engagement with Trimmer. He had fully made up his mind to carry out his intention. If the instance had been an ordinary one, he would have made some further effort to get on good terms and come to an understanding with his wife; but in this instance

he was cut to the heart, all of his pent-up friendship for Trimmer being involved.

After he and his friend had chatted and talked over old times again, he said:

"By the way, old man, about Thursday. I find that Mrs. Applegate has an engagement for that night, and, if you don't mind, I will ask you and your wife to dine with me and go to the theatre afterwards. We'll have a bang-up time."

Trimmer's face fell.

"That's too bad!" he exclaimed. "Sorry your wife can't be with us. Never mind. We'll try it again. Had n't we better put it off—some other night when we can all——"

"No," exclaimed Applegate decisively. "I want to do this in my own way. We three will go out and make a night of it. I'll take you to——"

Here followed a discussion of the various plays on.

When Trimmer got to the hotel late that afternoon, he hastened, in all masculine innocence, to impart the news to his wife.

"Applegate wants us to dine with him Thursday night," he said, "and go to the play. He's going to get tickets. Wife could n't come on account of previous engagement. Too bad, but we'll have something else."

Mrs. Trimmer regarded him with amazement.

"What did you say?" she exclaimed. "*Thursday?*"

"Yes, that's what I said."

"But Mrs. Applegate called on me this afternoon, and she asked us to dinner Thursday night. She's real nice—ever so nice."

Trimmer gazed at her in astonishment.

"You must have gotten it wrong," he cried. "Perhaps it is next week."

"Nonsense! It was this week all right. Seven o'clock."

"What do you suppose it means?"

Mrs. Trimmer laughed heartily. Her feminine imagination had circumvented the whole mystery.

"Why, you stupid thing," she cried, "it's as plain as a pikestaff. Those things always happen in one way. You see, the other day when he met us he invited us to dinner on Thursday. I laughed to myself even then, for I knew his wife had something to say about it; but then, you men are all alike. Well, he went home and probably told her what he had done, and that she must call on me, and naturally she objected. Then they had a scrap, and he went off mad and invited you on his own hook. In the mean time Mrs. Applegate got over her mad, realized that it would place her in a false position if she *did n't* do the proper thing, and so she came around to see me this afternoon."

Trimmer, his crude mind groping about for a solution and much inclined to give it all up, fell back on his wife's superior intuition.

"Well," he said hopelessly, "what are we going to do now? What's going to happen?"

Mrs. Trimmer reflected for about three seconds.

"Why, it's easy," she replied. "He'll be a little sullen about what he has done, and when he goes home to-night he won't say anything about it. She will be the first one to speak. She'll tell him something like this."

Mrs. Trimmer began to imitate the action of an injured woman who was in the right.

"She'll say: 'Well, I called on your friend's wife to-day and invited her to dinner Thursday, and I hope that now you are satisfied.'"

"And what will he say?" asked Trimmer, with intense interest.

Mrs. Trimmer laughed again, a hearty Western peal. The absolute certainty of her own deductions carried her away for the moment.

"Why, he will say nothing," she replied, "but he'll sneak right off the way any man would do, and make it right on the quiet with you. He'll lie out of it, or make some flimsy excuse. I should n't be surprised if he telephoned you at any moment."

Trimmer shook his head emphatically. A single stolid idea was beginning to penetrate it.

"Well, if he does," he replied, "I'll stand by him. I won't go there. You see, if we did, it would be an admission that he was wrong. We'll just say that we can't come."

Mrs. Trimmer was shaking him by his shoulder.

"You idiot!" she cried. "You'll do nothing of the sort. You'll tell him it's all right, you understand? *It's all right.*"

At this moment the telephone rang.

"There!" she exclaimed. "What did I say? Now you answer it and say we'll be delighted to come, and that you understand, and that *it's all right.*"

She pushed him toward the telephone.

Trembling, he obeyed.

It was Applegate's voice that greeted him—a voice low and "sneaky," but distinct.

"Old man, I made a mistake. My wife has no engagement Thursday. She has been to see your wife. I just called you up to tell you not to say anything about my invitation this afternoon, if you have not already done so. I'll explain when I see you."

Trimmer turned half round and saw his wife standing over him menacingly.

"It's all right," he shouted feebly. "We'll be there, of course. De-lighted. Good-by."

Then he put down the receiver and turned to his wife.

"What are we to do now?" he asked. "How are we to act?"

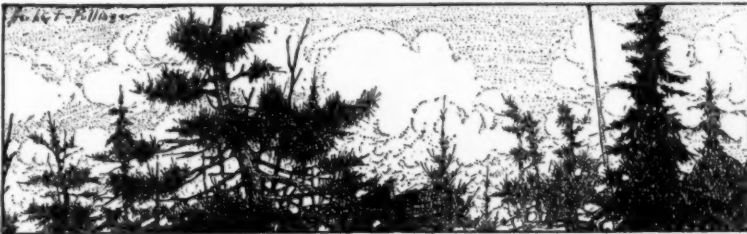
"Act!" repeated Mrs. Trimmer scornfully. "Why, naturally, of course; just as if nothing had ever happened."

Then a quiet smile of superiority came over her face.

"Oh, you men!" she exclaimed. "You think you are so awfully clever. Why, you don't understand even the rudiments. You take us literally, when it suits your vanity to do so. Let Mr. Applegate alone, my dear. First he placed his poor wife at a disadvantage, then he showed her that he mistrusted her, and finally he tried to lie out of it."

And then she added softly, as she looked tenderly at her husband:

"Poor fellow!"

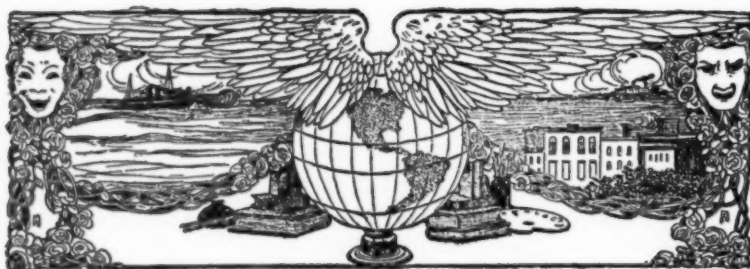


AUTUMN SONG

BY CLINTON SCOLLARD

THE leaves fall,
 Shifting, drifting, sifting,
 A sad thrall
 In their rustling undertone;
 The winds call,
 And no rifting mists are lifting,
 While reaped are all
 Of the vernal harvests sown!

And yet, yet,
 Under the frosts that sunder,—
 The chill net,
 And the bonds that clasp and cling,—
 The violet
 Will wake with its fragrant wonder
 At the flute's fret,
 At the kindling cry of spring!



WAYS OF THE HOUR

A DEPARTMENT OF CURRENT COMMENT AND
CRITICISM—SANE, STIMULATING, OPTIMISTIC

WHEN THIEVES

ONCE, in the Valley of Somewhere, there was a large and well organized band of thieves, but they did not call themselves by that name, because it had become opprobrious. Instead, they assumed the more polite title "politician."

Now, it was the habit of these politicians to prey upon the people in season and out of season, for there was no closed season. Not only that, but for a long time they made the people like it, as was proved by the fact that the people were wont to hold elections and apportion the "swag" and the persimmons among the most prominent. This "swag" they called by the euphemistic term "emoluments."

For many years they thus lived peaceably. The people were a simple folk, and seemed to be content. Indeed, they thought that civilization was impossible without politicians.

As time elapsed, however, the politicians became more greedy. In charging what the traffic would bear, they waxed more and more overbearing. Not only that, but they fought among themselves ever more and more bitterly.

"'T is well that they fight," said the poet. "When thieves fall out, honest men receive their due." And so the people rolled over on the other side and went to sleep again.

Things went on apace, but, in spite of their theories, the falling out of the thieves brought no relief to the honest men, for, though a number of honest man had apparently survived the pernicious influ-

ence of thief-rule, not one of them seemed to have any great amount of due in his possession.

At length a Wise Man, who, by the way, was neither a newspaper editor nor a preacher, came forward from one of the backward provinces of Somewhere. "Listen," said he. "Would n't it be nice if we could get along without any thieves at all? The devil is no better than the deep blue sea and vice versa. I have heard it said that when thieves fall out honest men receive their due. Now, the point I want to make is this: I am reliably informed that this falling-out is only a bluff. It is a sham battle arranged to conform to your theory. I got this from my son, who is engaged to a stenographer of one of the thieves. Now, look here! Thieves have too much sense to fall out. The way for us to get our due is to get rid of both sets of thieves."

And the people harkened, and the Wise Man's words listened good to them, whereupon they arose in all their democratic might and bade both sets of thieves begone.

Moral: When thieves seem to fall out, there's a hen on.

ELLIS O. JONES

THE MAN FROM HOME

LORD BACON, whether he wrote Shakespeare or not, was a very wise man. On being asked advice for a friend who was about to make the Grand Tour, he said: "Let him sequester himself from the company of his countrymen and diet in such places where there is good company of the nation where he travelleth." Surely these be words of ripe philosophy.

There are some Americans who have put into practice this advice, and are content to live in Rome as Romans. But for the most part our fellow-countrymen, scattered plentifully over Europe from Ellen's Isle to Capri, will, like the proverbial Englishman, carry their country with them. Therefore when our Baconian philosopher returns home in the autumn he tells tales of how one fellow-citizen compared the purple-hazed and desolate Campagna with newly-irrigated fields in Arizona, of how another complained that Montmartre was n't up to Coney Island, and a third lamented audibly John Bull's preference for Scotch whiskey over rye. "I travel to see new sights, to think new thoughts," says our Baconian, "but the ubiquitous American seems to travel only to compare, and is never so happy as when he finds the label 'made in Dayton, Ohio, U. S. A.' " "And worst of all," says another, "such folk will not let you alone. They open their arms at sight of you, they seize your hand, they invite you to join them at the nearest American bar! And they do it all with the conviction that on-looking natives must admire this friendly fervor of fellow-citizens!"

It is true, Americans abroad do not love to sequester themselves from the company of their countrymen. There are few who have attained that philosophic height.

Yet if the Baconian traveller will look deeper he will find other traits which in the summing up must, we submit, outvalue this seeming bumptiousness. Generally speaking, the Man from Home is honest, is generous, is chivalrous to women, and, with no disparagement of other races, these are qualities the traveller comes to set more and more store on the longer he is abroad. Mark Twain's *Innocents Abroad* might have been very trying to the romantic traveller sinking into day-dreams, but they must have been very consoling when the dreamer waked and wanted a helping-hand. All of which, you say, merely means that each race prefers its own virtues and vices to those of other peoples. Well, that may be so, but if you don't agree with my conclusion, try the experiment yourself and see.

By all which I do not mean to hold a brief for the failure of many Americans to follow Bacon's counsel, but merely to remind the more critical of our home-coming brethren that there were times and circumstances when they missed that very company. On mature deliberation, will not the most carping of them all admit that the scales do dip a little in favor of the garrulous but open-hearted traveller from Home?

RUPERT SARGENT HOLLAND

THE COMIC SUPPLEMENT

NO one—not even the artist authors—will deny that the average comic supplement of the daily press is crude, flat, and silly. And yet we laugh. We may laugh surreptitiously, but we laugh—we, the keen, busy American people. Every Sunday morning a chuckle spreads from coast to coast.

About the comic supplement, with its lavish coloring and its dreadful figures, is something fascinating. It may be the fascination which attends the feats of a juggler, while the audience waits breathless to see what he will do next. For the comic supplement is full of extravagances: Buster Brown prankily paints walls, floods ceilings, smashes furniture; Maud kicks in doors, and kicks out walls, and whangs recklessly her master Si; Pan-handle Pete, Simple Simon, the man who would be rid of his dog, the "See! See!" baby and his victims, the unfortunate Gus, and such folk—all these provide a perfect kaleidoscope of catastrophes.

They prove the truth of Bob Burdette's declaration that humor lies chiefly in other people's misfortunes. There is nothing so funny as another man's wrestle with a refractory stove-pipe—and if the chair gives way beneath him, that is the very climax.

It may be considered a sad commentary upon the American public that the comic supplement does excite a laugh—even a chuckle. However, on the contrary, so frankly foolish is the usual supplement that no one need be *ashamed* to laugh. And while careful guardians of the country's morals may decry the supplement because it does tend to raise mirth over mishaps, and thus (theoretically) hardens the heart, on the other hand it is pleasant to reflect that once a week, at least, a laugh is brought into practically every household in the land.

Therefore let us pause, and relax, and be silly, when we can.

EDWIN L. SABIN

CHILDREN NOT CRIMINALS

THE State of New York has decided that no child under sixteen shall be called a criminal. It is simply delinquent. This is a step of progress, although not a long one. For many years a child has had no civil accountability until twenty-one, or, in the case of girls, in some States, eighteen years, up to which time he or she cannot acquire property, make contracts, or be held responsible in civil damages. One might suppose that the same restrictions would be placed in criminal law, but New York has gone only so far as to make sixteen years the crime limit, while at the same time it holds punishment in its own hands instead of turning it over to parents. The Chinese make the whole family responsible for the evil act of any member, and the results are astonishingly satisfactory.

It is admitted by students of sociology that our criminal code is crude, that our whole system of criminology is brutal and archaic, and that we must go a long way before we establish one which will really make for the betterment of social conditions. We now punish people without trying to reform them. We make professional criminals by refusing one who has been in jail a right to earn an honest living. Give a dog a bad name and hang him. And this is most illogical since the punishment is supposed to expiate the crime and make a clean sheet. At the same time, plenty of evil-doers, those who are known as such, are received in good society simply because they have managed to escape the brand of criminal conviction.

It is well enough to save children from this dread incubus, but the law has not gone far enough. Conduct is not wholly the result of a deliberately established system of individual ethics. We are affected by heredity, environment, and experience. Moreover, in this country we have forty-six bodies of criminal law—one in each State. What is a crime in a given State is not always prohibited in one adjoining. Thus we have all sorts of crimes, with varying penalties, until it is no wonder that the average man is confused as to his own status.

Few persons do from mere choice that which is ethically or legally wrong. Original sin, if there be such a thing, does not go so far. Our motives are generally good. Most persons prefer to live in amity with their neighbors, which means a respect for the rights of others and a tolerable performance of duties. But circumstances alter cases so much that we often feel called upon to violate the rights of others for our own salvation. We need the money, or we find ourselves losing in the struggle for existence and feel oppressed by those in power. We take our own chances and often with disastrous results.

Now, it must be apparent, after all is said by philosophers and law-givers and prophets, that the conduct of life is based largely on experience. We accept admonition more or less, but learn most by actual contact with problems. It is here that the child fails. His store of wisdom and his experience are small. It is natural for him to gratify his own desires, and he chafes under restraint until a number of years of experience and parental training fit him to become personally responsible for his own acts.

It is gratifying that children under sixteen are to escape the prison mark and the criminal brand, but this is simply a confession that our whole system of criminology is on a false basis. It is well to begin reform with the children, who are perhaps the greatest sufferers and the least offenders, but the principle must be applied all the way up to the end that punishment may have the element of reform in it, so that society may profit. In a few States some progress is being made in this direction. It is one of the Twentieth Century problems to conserve society by making laws and enforcing them with regard to Twentieth Century knowledge instead of acting on the principles and practices of the Dark Ages.

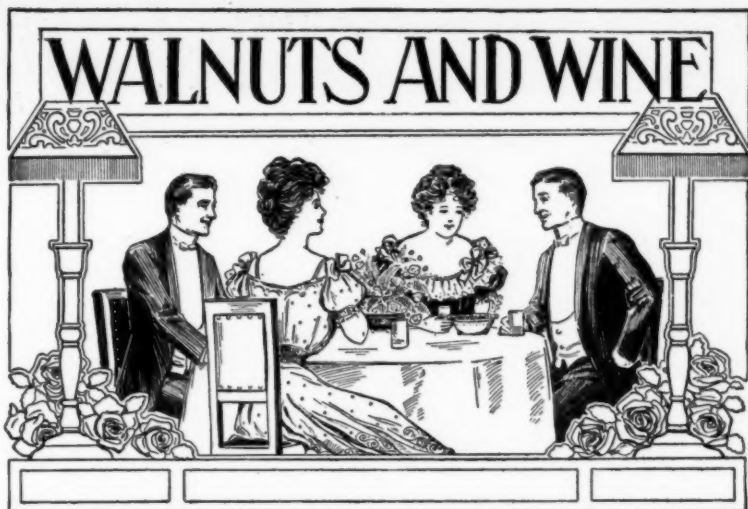
JOSEPH M. ROGERS



BEREFT

BY MARY BYERLY

NOT she who, kneeling by her dear child's grave,
Knoweth motherhood's compassion mild;
Nor she whose loving tenderness doth crave
Of niggard life naught save some sweet dream-child;
But she whose dwarfed soul crieth, worldly-wise,
"I need no children in my paradise."



HE CAME ON FOR PLEASURE

The private omnibus drew up in front of a middle-class New York hotel, and out of it stepped a tall, thin man, clad in a black broadcloth suit and a straw hat, and a woman with a demure countenance and a silk brocaded gown.

They approached the clerk at the counter. The man registered. The woman waited by his side.

"How far away is Brooklyn?" he asked.

"About thirty minutes by the subway."

"And can we reach the Jersey suburbs and see our cousins there in a day?"

"You can be landed within a range of forty miles in an hour and a quarter."

"How long does it take to reach the Zoölogical gardens?"

"You can make it in about three-quarters of an hour."

"And how about the Statue of Liberty and the Aquarium?"

"Boat leaves for Statue every half-hour or so. Thirty minutes from here by subway."

The man turned to his wife.

"You're pretty tired, Sarah," he said, "and I guess you had better set down. I'll find out the rest."

He took her over to a seat in the lobby and came back. He leaned forward confidentially.

"How far away is the nearest race-track?" he asked.

"Belmont Park in less than an hour."

"Any poker games going on around here?"

Walnuts and Wine

"Dozens."

"Good dance-halls—where you can kick up?"

"Almost anywhere along Sixth Avenue—two blocks away."

"You keep good whiskey here?"

"Eighty brands. Down-stairs—one turn to right."

The stranger gave a side look at the lady he had come with, who was gazing upward at the fancy soap ceiling. Then he leaned still farther forward.

"You see," he whispered, "it's this way. We've been married ten years, and this is the first time we could break away. Now, 'long about to-morrow or next day I'm going to lose her—see?—and paint this old town red, green, and light blue. And say, better give me a latch-key! There may be nights when I won't roll in until midnight!"

Thomas L. Masson



YOUNG AMERICA

By Mazie V. Caruthers

Of course Thanksgiving does n't mean
Just sport for every one—
Our parson has to preach that day,
And that can't be much fun!

And Mother has to sup'rintend
The roasting of the turk,
While Father sharpens carving-knives—
This all means lots of work!

But then for me 't's a dandy time:
I simply take my seat
At table, when the dinner's on,
'N' eat, 'n' eat, 'N' EAT!



ON TO THE NORTH POLE!

When word of the discovery of the North Pole came to Chattanooga, a slightly deaf old lady remarked unctuously, "Well, now I always said them Cook tourists got about 'most everywhere. I ain't a bit surprised to hear that one of 'em 's reached the top notch in the travelling line."

Caroline Morrison

Walnuts and Wine



**"Good Morning, Have You Used
Pears' Soap"**

Especially after Exercise, it makes a bath of delight—it is exhilarating, healthy, satisfying and "matchless for the complexion."

It is the most exquisite of all soaps for the skin, being not only the best known cleansing agent, but a Soap which also possesses the exact emollient properties necessary for the maintaining of the skin in the condition of perfect health and functional activity.

OF ALL SCENTED SOAPS PEARS' OTTO OF ROSE IS THE BEST.
"All rights secured."

In writing to advertisers, kindly mention LIPPINCOTT'S.

Walnuts and Wine

PRACTICAL POLITICS

A political office in a small town in Iowa was vacant. The office paid two hundred and fifty dollars a year, and there was keen competition for it. The Democratic candidate, Ezekiel Hicks, was a shrewd old fellow, and a neat campaign fund was turned over to him. To the astonishment of all, however, he was defeated.

"I can't account for it," said one of the Democratic leaders gloomily. "With that money, we should have won. How did you lay it out, Ezekiel?"

"Well," said Ezekiel slowly, pulling his whiskers, "yer see, that office only pays two hundred and fifty dollars a year salary, an' I did n't see no sense in payin' nine hundred dollars out to get the office, so I just bought me a little truck-farm instead."

H. E. Zimmerman

NOT A FAILURE

During the language lesson the schoolmaster asked one of his pupils if he could translate the words "our sisters" into French.

"No, sir," stammered the boy.

"That is correct, Johnny," said the teacher kindly, and passed on to the next question.

M. L. L.

QUITE ANOTHER THING

"Whom are you going to give those cigars to?"

"To the janitor, so that he will give us more heat."

"Why, I thought I heard you abusing him terribly this morning."

"My dear woman, you don't think I dare address the janitor like that. I was talking to the landlord."

Clara O'Neill

PARISIAN POLITENESS

"That the French are the politest people on earth," says a New Yorker, who spends a bit of his time in Paris, "I have always been convinced; and a recent incident in a Parisian dentist's office accorded me additional confirmation of that belief.

"I entered the dentist's anteroom just as a patient—an exceedingly woebegone expression on his countenance—was approached by an attendant.

"Whom, m'sieu," inquired the attendant, with the most sympathetic of inflections in his voice—"whom shall I have the misery of announcing to *M. le Docteur*?"

Edwin Tarrisse

Walnuts and Wine



NABISCO

SUGAR WAFERS

with

Turkish Parfait

Desserts of all descriptions, ice creams, sherbets, ices, frozen puddings, beverages—all attain distinction when served with NABISCO Sugar Wafers—the superlative of dessert confections.

TURKISH PARFAIT

Put quarter-pound freshly roasted coffee berries in basin, add small piece vanilla pod, pour over pint of hot cream and allow to infuse half hour. Cream yolks of six eggs with quarter pound sugar; when well beaten add to coffee infusion. Place basin over saucepan of boiling water and stir until mixture acquires consistency of thick cream. Strain, add half-pint cream and beat over ice until quite cold. Serve with NABISCO Sugar Wafers.

In ten cent tins—also in twenty-five cent tins

NATIONAL BISCUIT COMPANY

In writing to advertisers, kindly mention LIPPINCOTT'S.

Walnuts and Wine

LACONIC

Mike Flannigan stood watching a group of tobogganists with engaged attention. Presently an accident occurred on the incline, and a week later the injured victim brought suit against the park commissioners. The Irishman was served with a summons, and when the case was called he stood complaisantly before the Court.

"Did you witness the accident, Flannigan?" interrogated the Judge.

"Oi did that, yer honor."

"Where did it happen?"

"On wan o' thim things in Lincoln Park."

"Eh? One of *which* things?"

"It's niver th' name do Oi know of 't."

"Omit the name—describe it."

The witness shuffled his feet nervously.

"Come!" urged the Judge. "I'm waiting."

"Well, thin, bedad! it's wan o' thim shteeep places where iverybody is at once, an' no room fer nobody, an' iverybody piles on a long sled, an' somebody yells, '*Look out!*' an' thin all there is to it is '*S—h—h—h—h!*' an' walk back a moile!"

Harrold Skinner

WITH THE AUTUMN POETS

By Carlyle Smith

The Last Rose of Summer

"T is the last rose of summer left blooming alone.
All her lovely companions are faded and gone,
But never a grief can her smiling unsettle—
She knows she is worth seven dollars a petal.

The Melancholy Days

The melancholy days have come, the saddest of the year,
When hotel bills in vast array in father's mail appear;
When Marmaduke goes back to school to learn his A-B-C's,
With charges high for chalk and slates and sundry other fees;
When William he goes off to Yale to study Roman Law,
Mixed in with English Letters and a course in "*Raw-Raw-Raw!*"
While sister out a-shopping with her mother daily goes
Upon a quest for hats and furs and winter furbelows.

Walnuts and Wine

The Comfort of the Telephone



The Bell System has become the *nervous system* of the business and social world.

The comfort it affords the women in the homes of America cannot be measured.

Do you measure it in considering the value of your Bell telephone?

The mother of children can find out where they are at any particular hour of the day—and how they are—even though their visits carry them to the country village or the city hundreds of miles away.

The husband on a trip talks from his hotel room to his wife at home.

There is a world of comfort in the knowledge that you can talk together at a moment's notice, wherever you may be.

The Bell Long Distance service offers, ready recruited for your call, the largest body of active business men in the world. If you have a telephone, avail yourself of its long distance possibilities.

The highest type of public service can be achieved *only by one policy, one system, universal service.*

**The American Telephone and Telegraph Company
And Associated Companies**

Every Bell Telephone Is the Center of the System

In writing to advertisers, kindly mention LIPPINCOTT'S.

The Bell telephone has a special value because it is everywhere—because at sight you feel a familiar acquaintance with a Bell instrument or a Bell sign.

There are over 4,000,000 Bell stations. You cannot use them all, but from time to time you have a real vital need for one. Which one you cannot foretell.

There are six billion calls over the telephones of the Bell System every year.

Many of these are comforting calls from afar, calls whose actual money value can no more be reckoned than the value of the happiness which one man has and another man cannot buy.

The *very existence* of the Bell telephone service has its value to you, even at moments when you are not using it.

Walnuts and Wine

Everybody works poor father!
He sits 'round all day.
Eyebrows blue with bother
Over the bills to pay.
Works without cessation
Trying to save his vest—
They get { a swell vacation,
 { the titivation,
 { the education,
Father gets the "rest."

The Revengeful Poet

"Oh, where did yesterday's sunset go
When it faded down the hills so low?"
Thus said a Poet last night to me
As we sat alone by the silent sea,
And I
Did thus reply:
"Well, it looked to me, as I watched it slide
Down the burgeoning hills on the western side,
As if it were going ker-choo, kerplunk,
To spend a few minutes at Ker-achunk."
And he with a wild and an echoing cry
Collided his fist with my bright blue eye,
And turned it black
As a collier's sack
As we sat by the silent sea!



FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE

The manager of a department store received the following order from one of his out-of-town customers, who wanted a bonnet:

"Mazure of head from ear to ear over top of head 12 inches; from ear to ear under my chin 9½ inches; from forehead to back hair 7 inches. I want a black lace bonnet with streamers and rosetts of red or yellow satting ribbon and would like a bunch of pink Rozes or a blue plume with a black jet buckel. If artifishels air still the stile I want a bunch of grapes or a bird's tale somewhere. I do not want anything too fansy but if you think a reath of pansies would look good why put one on. I have some good pink ribbon hear at home so you need not put on strings."

H. E. Zimmerman

Walnuts and Wine

The Finest Quality

BAKER'S

Breakfast Cocoa



Registered U. S. Pat. Office

A product of a perfect process, the result of years of painstaking and conscientious effort to produce

A perfect food beverage

It is of absolute purity, delicious flavor, and possesses all the strength that a pure, unadulterated cocoa can have.

52 Highest Awards in Europe
and America

A new and handsomely illustrated recipe book containing chocolate and cocoa recipes by Miss Parloa, and forty new recipes for home-made candies by Mrs. Janet McKenzie Hill, will be sent free by mail to any address

WALTER BAKER & CO. Ltd.
Established 1780 DORCHESTER, MASS.

In writing to advertisers, kindly mention LIPPINCOTT'S.

Walnuts and Wine

THE STORY OF SUE

By Chester Firkins

An ancient Sioux lady named Sue
Stole cash from a trustful m'sieu';
And M'sieu' on his knees
To a lawyer begged: "Please
Now for poor M'sieu's sou sue Sioux Sue!"



THE PLEASURES OF ANTICIPATION

It was on the Subway the other afternoon, and the two men with their hands clutching the straps, and their feet fixed firmly on those of two Italians and a Chinaman, conversed with each other. One of them was tall, and the other so short that it was really doubtful if he reached all the way down to the floor of the car. On the face of the former was a look of settled gloom, but the little chap beamed graciously on the world.

"What's the matter with you, Bob?" said he. "You look as if you'd lost every friend you ever had in the world and four dollars besides. Anything wrong in business?"

"Nope," said the other wearily. "Business is pretty good—hundred per cent better than it was this time last year."

"No sickness in the family, I hope?" inquired the other solicitously.

"Nope—they're all in fine condition—never better," said he of the settled gloom.

"Ain't feeling any too well yourself, eh?" persisted the other.

"Me? Oh, I'm all right——" began the gloomy one.

"Then what the dickens is the matter with you, going around with a look like a war-cloud on your face?" demanded Mr. Shorty.

"Well, you see, Bill," explained the other, "I'm going around to Hawkins's to-night. Jim Webster and Tommy Harrington and Billy Parker are going to be there, and——"

"Great Heavens, man!" ejaculated Shorty, "what is there to be blue about in that? Why, those fellows are the salt of the earth. You'll have a perfectly ripping good time."

"I know that, Bill," said the tall man, as he heaved a deep and melancholy sigh; "but think, my boy, just think what a busting old headache I'll have to-morrow morning!"

John Kendrick Bangs

Walnuts and Wine

Along the Santa Fe to California

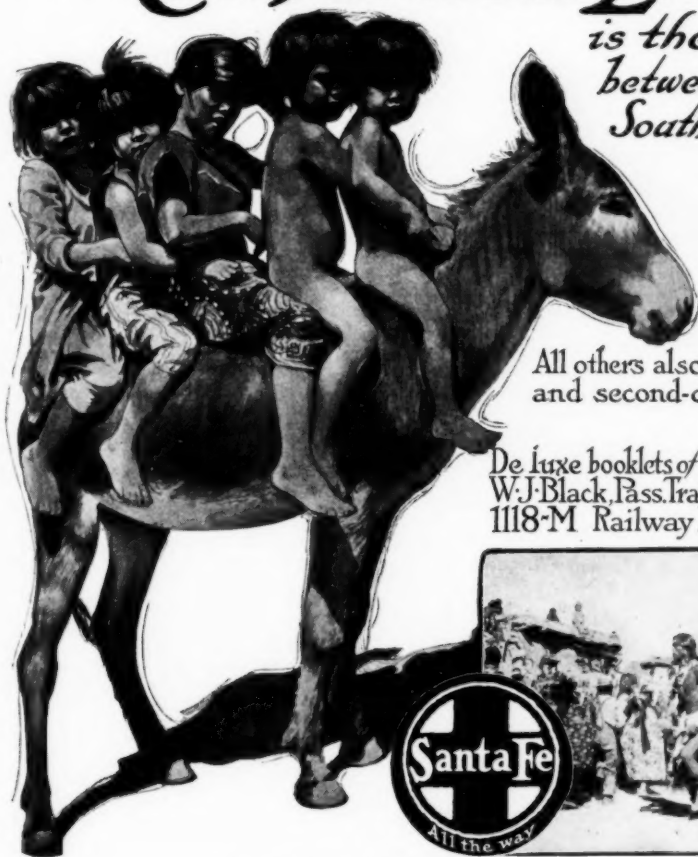
*you see Indian pueblos,
centuries old, and the Grand
Canyon of Arizona*

The California Limited

*is the only train
between Chicago and
Southern California
via any line
exclusively for
first-class
travel*

All others also carry tourist sleepers
and second-class passengers

De luxe booklets of train and trip on request
W. J. Black, Pass. Traffic Mgr. A. T. & S. F. Ry. System
1118-M Railway Exchange, Chicago



In writing to advertisers, kindly mention LIPPINCOTT'S.

Walnuts and Wine

THE OPTIMIST

"I'm sorry to hear your mule died," I said to Happy Sam.

"Oh, it's all right, boss," he returned resignedly. "I ain't got no kick comin'."

G. T. Evans

THE MEDICO

"What have you been doing, dear, while I have been away all day?"

"Organizing a cooking class. A lot of girls and women are in it. We teach one another how to cook."

"And what do you do with what you have cooked?"

"Send it around to the neighbors."

"Dear little woman! Always thoughtful of your husband's practice."

La Touche Hancock

UNIVERSITY NOTE

If the average college student would have fewer "fast" friends, and more "close" ones, the average parent would be better satisfied.

Walter Pulitzer

COLD COMFORT

In a country store a young boy was under discussion by the cracker-barrel committee. Jones had just remarked, "That boy's a regular fool. He don't know nothing; he don't know enough to come in when it rains." Then he discovered the boy's father, who had overheard the remark, and, wishing to appease him, he said, "Wall, Sam, 't ain't your fault. You learned him all you knew."

Frank S. Ray

THE ONLY KINDS HE KNEW

"Are you fond of looking at the stars?" asked Miss Boston, turning to her companion, between the acts at a Broadway theatre.

"Well, yes," answered the engaging young man; "but as a rule the chorus is good enough for me."

W. Carey Wonderly

A NEW ONE ON HER

"Nora, we are going to have a Filipino delegate to dinner tomorrow," said the Senator's wife.

"I'm afraid you'll have to cook it yerself," replied Nora. "I never heard of th' thing."

Perrine Lambert

Walnuts and Wine



King C. Gillette



Don't Say "Please" to Your Razor

YOU want a razor that you don't have to coax—a razor that you don't have to fuss with or worry over or "put in condition" to use.

You want a razor that "is on the job" the minute you pick it up.

You don't have to say *please* to your comb and brush—your wash-basin and your towel—you simply use them.

Shaving, to be sure, is a finer operation—but you should be able to shave without thinking much about it.

You can if you buy a Gillette.

The average Gillette user can shave in three minutes and read the head-

lines in the morning paper—and by the average user we do not mean a man here and there but all sorts of men, with all sorts of beards, in all parts of the world—three million of them.

The time to buy a Gillette is now.

It pays for itself in three months.

It costs \$5.00—and it lasts a lifetime.

No stropping—no honing.

The Gillette, illustrated herewith, is so compact that it can be carried in the pocket or slipped in the side of a traveling bag. It comes in gold, silver or gun metal—with handle and blade box to match. *The blades are fine.*

Prices, \$5.00 to \$7.50. For sale everywhere.

New York, Times Bldg.

Chicago, Stock Exchange Bldg.

London Office, 17 Holborn Viaduct

GILLETTE SALES CO.

571 Kimball Building, Boston

Factories: Boston, Montreal, London, Berlin, Paris

Canadian Office

63 St. Alexander St.

Montreal



In writing to advertisers, kindly mention LIPPINCOTT'S.

Walnuts and Wine

THE QUESTION?

By Corinne Jarrell

Mary had a little lamb;
For it she ceased to care.
Her affections were transplanted
To a little Teddy bear.

Of this she also wearied,
As so often is the case,
And a saucy Billy 'Possum
Came to take poor Teddy's place.

And now I often wonder,
When Bill's no more the rule,
Will she lavish her affections
On a little Bryan mule?



A SUCCESSFUL STUMP SPEAKER

John Kendrick Bangs, the author, who spends so much of his time at his home on the Maine coast that he has become a citizen of that State, took part in last year's political campaign, and had many interesting experiences on the stump. He admits that in one instance the joke was on him.

At this particular meeting he was the third speaker, following two local spellbinders to whom the crowd listened patiently in anticipation of the "big gun" of the occasion.

The evening was warm, and while the second speaker was holding forth a fat member of the band, occupying a seat directly in front of the stage, yielded to the somniferous influences and snored loudly.

"That's one on you," chuckled Mr. Bangs to his fellow orator, as the latter closed his peroration and retired to his seat at the rear of the stage. "Now watch me wake him up!"

Sure enough, scarcely was Mr. Bangs well under way before the fat man opened his eyes, stared wildly for an instant—and bolted for the door!

John Clair Minot



When we think of Ireland's woes, our hearts go pity Pat!

Clara O'Neill

Why Irrigation Bonds Are So Popular

The most popular bonds that we handle now are Irrigation Bonds. They have displaced, with a large share of our customers, Municipal, Corporation, and Public Utility bonds, which pay a lower rate.

When rightly conducted, Irrigation projects now involve no uncertainty. The Government itself is spending tens of millions of dollars in reclaiming this arid land.

The demand for irrigated land exceeds the supply, because of its enormous fertility. And because an unfailing water supply, under constant control, insures one against crop failures.

The most productive and costly farm lands in America are now in the irrigated sections.

Carefully Guarded

The projects which we finance are carefully guarded. Our own engineers and attorneys pass on every feature. An officer of our Company, residing in the West, keeps constantly in touch with every project until the whole work is completed.

We have our pick of these projects because we are known as the leading dealers in Irrigation bonds. The projects we finance are always well located.

In the past 15 years we have sold 71 separate issues of Reclamation bonds—Drainage and Irrigation—without a dollar of loss to any investor.

The Security

Irrigation bonds are secured by farm liens, given by individual owners in payment for water rights.

These liens are conservative—more so than the usual farm mortgage. They are often for less than one-fourth the land's value.

The first crop from the land is frequently sufficient to pay the whole lien—often by several times over.

In addition, the bonds are secured by a first mortgage on all the property which the Irrigation Company owns—the property which the proceeds of the bonds help to build.

Some of these bonds are municipal obligations, issued, like School bonds, by organized districts. Such bonds are tax liens on all the real property in the district.

Some of these bonds are issued subject to the provisions of the Federal law known as the "Carey Act."

The security in all our projects is ideal and ample. It is hard to conceive of anything better.

Six Per Cent.

Irrigation bonds pay six per cent. interest—a higher rate than can now be obtained on any large class of bonds based on equal security.

The reason is this: Irrigation projects are profitable. There are few undertakings where such amounts of money can be used to equal advantage.

The demand for irrigated land is now overwhelming. And there is great demand for money that will help to supply it. So the bonds pay this liberal rate.

\$100—\$500—\$1,000

Irrigation bonds are issued in series, usually payable all the way from two to twelve years. One may make long-time or short-time investments. Every bond paid off increases the security back of the rest.

They are issued in denominations of \$100, \$500, and \$1,000, so they appeal to both small investors and large.

Ask for Our Book

We have written a book on Irrigation bonds which every investor, small and large, should read. It is based on our intimate knowledge of the facts, gained by 15 years of experience.

Please send this coupon today for it. It will enable you to judge if Irrigation bonds form the sort of investment you seek. (4)

Trowbridge & Niver Co.

(Established 1893)

Municipal and Corporation Bonds

**First National Bank Bldg.
CHICAGO**

**50 Congress Street
BOSTON**

Gentlemen:—Please send me your new Bond Book, "The World's Greatest Industry."

Name

Town

State 515

Walnuts and Wine

AN HONEST CONFESSION

A well-known divine was preaching one Sunday morning on the subject of "The Great and Small Things of Creation." To illustrate his thought that nothing was either too vast or too tiny to be of interest to God, he proceeded in these words:

"The Creator of this immense universe created also the most infinitesimal atom in it. The Architect of these vast mountains fashioned also the tiniest thread of gold running through them. The God who made me made a daisy."

H. E. Evans

STATESMANSHIP

"Well, they've elected Blingsby to Congress."

"What! Did that soulless, truckling, low-down politician——"

"Yes, and he told me he would push your name for local postmaster."

"Oh—Blingsby? Why, I did n't understand the name. That fellow's all right, and I've always said so. He's got the makings of a statesman—Blingsby!"

William N. Morse

THIS PROVES IT

By Karl von Kraft

They sent him up for being full,
And full he must have been—
His brother had to bail him out,
And it took a barrel of tin.

RAILROAD ECONOMY

The economy practised upon the Great Northern Railroad is well known among railroad men, one of the staunchest believers in the old saying that "Economy is the road to wealth" being the president, J. J. Hill. The story is told in the West that upon one occasion when President Hill was looking over a piece of track he found a new railroad spike. Taking it to the boss in charge of that stretch of road, he handed it to him and said:

"You must be more careful. Nothing must be wasted. Pick up all your spikes as you go along."

"Why, Mr. Hill," replied the "boss" promptly, "I've been payin' a man a salary for three years to hunt for that spike."

Caroline Lockhart

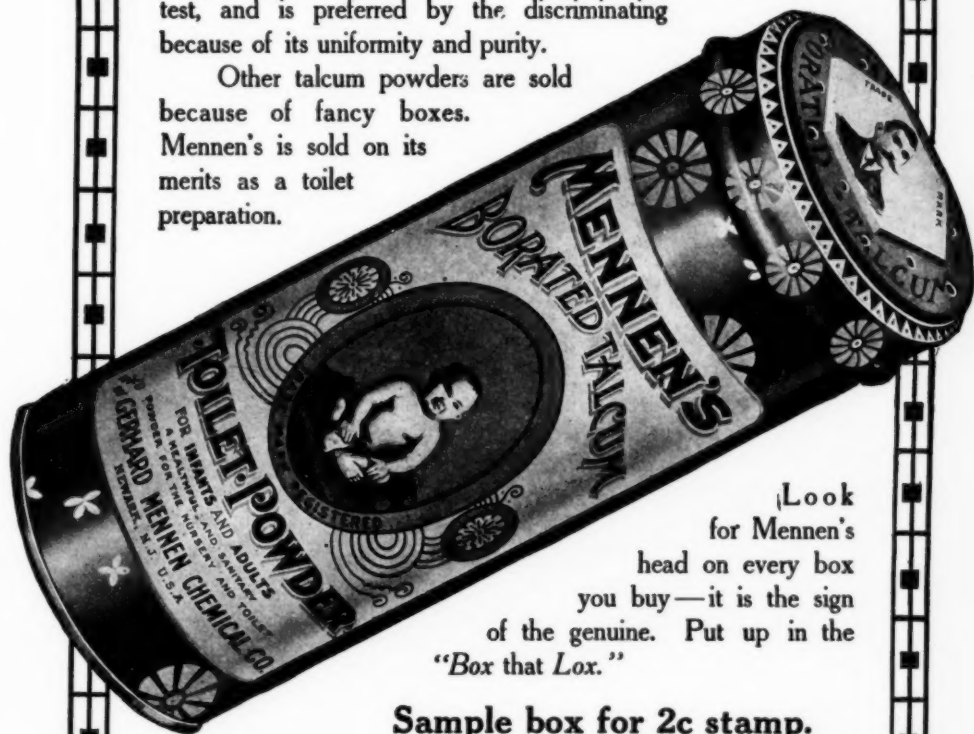
Walnuts and Wine

MENNEN'S

BORATED TALCUM TOILET POWDER

is the original—the first—talcum powder. It is the best by test, and is preferred by the discriminating because of its uniformity and purity.

Other talcum powders are sold because of fancy boxes. Mennen's is sold on its merits as a toilet preparation.



Look
for Mennen's
head on every box
you buy—it is the sign
of the genuine. Put up in the
"Box that Lox."

Sample box for 2c stamp.

Guaranteed by Gerhard Mennen Chemical Co.
under the Pure Food and Drug Act, June 30,
1906. Serial No. 1642.

Gerhard Mennen Co., Newark, N. J.



In writing to advertisers, kindly mention LIPPINCOTT'S.

Walnuts and Wine

A MISTAKEN CURE

"Jennie!" yelled the composer.

"Yes, dear," called back the gentle wife.

"Why in thunder don't you keep that kid quiet? What ails it?"

"I can't think, dear. I'm singing one of your lullabies to the poor little darling!"

Reginald Rochester

HIS FAUX PAS

"I hear your watch was stolen."

"Yes; the infernal idiot took it to the pawnshop. There it was at once recognized, and the man was locked up."

La Touche Hancock

TWO KINDS

The spectators in a county court-room were waxing very demonstrative over the testimony of one of the witnesses. The judge sternly admonished them to keep quiet, but to no effect; the offense was soon repeated.

"Clear the court-room," called out the judge to the bailiff.

The latter stepped forth pompously and, striking a forensic attitude, said: "Them blackguards that ain't lawyers will have to get out. Them that is lawyers can stay."

Adolph Alexander Thomas

IT SOUNDED HOPEFUL

A young man who was not particularly entertaining was monopolizing the attention of a pretty débutante with a lot of uninteresting conversation.

"Now, my brother," he remarked in the course of a dissertation on his family, "is just the opposite of me in every respect. Do you know my brother?"

"No," the débutante replied demurely, "but I should like to."

W. Stockard

FRILLS

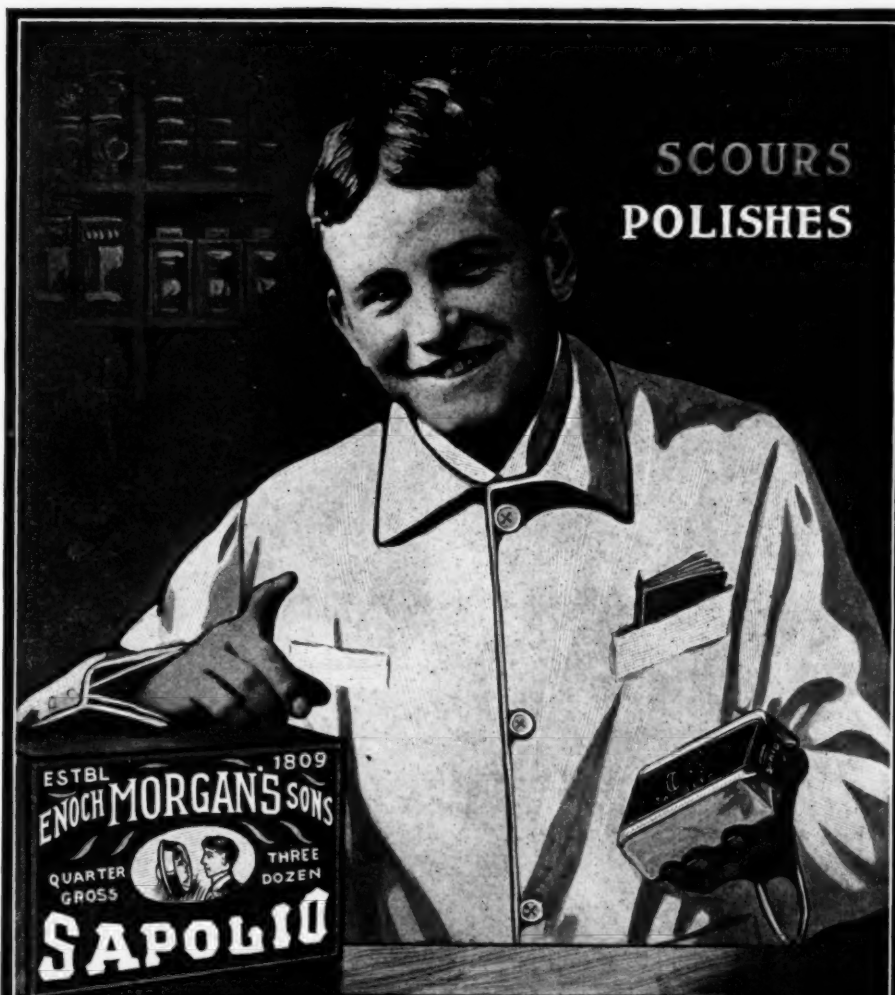
Mrs. Crabshaw: "The new girl I have said she had taken a course in domestic science."

Mrs. Crawford: "Is she different from the other girls you've had?"

Mrs. Crabshaw: "Only in one way: she wanted five dollars a month more."

J. J. O'Connell

Walnuts and Wine



SCOURS
POLISHES

"Sell **SAPOLIO** ?
Don't have to ~ sells itself.
Best seller in the store .
We'd as soon think of not
keeping flour."

In writing to advertisers, kindly mention LIPPINCOTT'S.

Walnuts and Wine

ALL BUT DINNY

She was an old and obviously earnest Irish woman, and she had travelled all the way to Frankfort to see her son Dinny drill with the First Regiment, now stationed at Todd's Point.

Up and down, up and down, Dinny was being drilled within an inch of his life by the commander of the "awkward squad."

Dinny did not see his old mother, and she saw no one but Dinny. There she stood with her sweet, old blue eyes suffused with tears and such a longing, mother-love look in them that she attracted the gaze of the crowd. Turning for one instant to those nearest her, she gulpingly said:

"Aw, wisha, look at 'im—ivery mother's son of thim out of step but me bye Dinny!"

Ella Hutchison Ellwanger

DIPLOMACY

By J. J. O'Connell

Say, girls, if you long for a vote,
You have only to be a bit foxy.
Just capture a husband, and note
How easy to do it by proxy.

FIELD'S DESCRIPTION OF AMERICA

Eugene Field's first visit to Europe was made soon after he had come into a considerable sum of money and while he was still a resident of St. Joseph, Missouri. He had been a reporter on the *St. Joseph Gazette* a number of years, and was becoming known on account of his verses. The legacy that had been left to him by a relative looked so large to him that he did not believe he would ever have to do newspaper work again. Little did he think that when he returned from Europe he would not have a dollar of it left, although such proved to be the case.

Field's fame had not extended to Europe at that time, but when he reached London he met friends there who introduced him in good society. He was invited to a number of receptions and met many people of note. On every occasion he was called upon to tell something about his native land, and the tales he told would have put Munchausen to shame. At one of the gatherings the subject of lynchings in America was being discussed.

"I suppose it is not unusual to see one or more lynchings every day," remarked an Englishman.

Walnuts and Wine

CRYSTAL Domino SUGAR



2 lb. and 5 lb.
Sealed Boxes !

BY GROCERS EVERYWHERE !

In writing to advertisers, kindly mention LIPPINCOTT'S.

Walnuts and Wine

"Not at all uncommon," replied Field. "In fact, we are so accustomed to seeing people lynched that we pay little attention to hangings of that character."

"And you have seen people lynched?" inquired a horrified lady sitting beside the American poet.

"Many of them," Field answered, in a tone so assuring that it would have done credit to a liar of twice his age and experience. "The last lynching I witnessed," he continued, "was just before I sailed. I was with some friends at dinner in a café in New York. The waiter had brought us pudding that had salt in it instead of sugar. We tasted it, and then with one accord arose and strung the waiter up to the chandelier."

"Did you participate in it?" asked the awe-stricken lady, in wide-eyed surprise.

"Well, no," replied Field. "I did not exactly have a part in it, for at the moment he was strung up I was down in the kitchen shooting the chef!"

Richard S. Graves

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Stranger (in a strange restaurant): "Say, waiter, I can't eat this stuff. Take it back and bring me something decent."

Waiter: "Sorry, but that's the best we can do."

Stranger: "It is, eh? Well, I'll show you. Where's the proprietor?"

Waiter: "Gone out to lunch."

Adolph Alexander Thomas

CRUEL

"Is n't that a good joke? It's my own."

"Great Scott! are you so old as that?"

Isaline Normand

THE PUZZLE

By E. S. H.

One day Tom ate some pumpkin pie,
The next wore pumpkin-colored tie.
Now, the thing that puzzles I,
And still will puzzle till I die,
Is how that piece of pumpkin pie
Came out in Tommy Ransom's tie.

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IN THE SUBWAY

By Reginald Rochester

The man whose life hangs by a thread
Need scarcely give a rap.
His peril does n't equal one
Whose life hangs by a strap!

A JOKER

A seedy-looking man entered a store in Trenton the other day, and asked for assistance, backing up his request with a long tale of sickness and lack of employment.

With a wink at his clerk, the merchant pointed to a friend who happened to be in the place, and replied:

"Ask that gentleman. He is the proprietor. I am only a clerk."

The friend received the beggar's request in a sympathetic manner, and, turning to the merchant, remarked: "This seems to be a worthy case, Mr. Jones. Give him a dollar from the cash register," and walked out of the store.

It was in vain that the merchant protested that it had been a joke. So insistent did the seedy one become that "de boss's" directions should be carried out, that it was finally necessary to do so in order to be rid of him.

Emmett Campbell Hall

THE MYSTERY SOLVED

In Iowa a husband whose married life was not one continuous round of bliss suddenly disappeared from home. Several weeks later a floating body was discovered in the river. The features were indistinguishable, but Mrs. Pringley identified the body as that of her husband, and it was buried with appropriate ceremonies.

A week after the funeral Mr. Pringley suddenly came home. He had been to Canada to escape conjugal trials for a while.

"Mr. Pringley's home now, is n't he?" said a neighbor to the wife.

"Yes."

"Were n't you surprised when he came back alive?" the neighbor asked.

"Yes, I was," returned Mrs. Pringley, without much interest, "but if I'd stopped and thought a moment I'd 'a' knew he'd been back. He's jes' that contrary!"

Homer Croy

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NOT ROOM ENOUGH

While riding on an electric car, during his first visit to the city, a farmer passed the yard of a monument company, where grave-stones and monuments were displayed. Turning to his host, he remarked in an awe-stricken voice, "They dew bury 'em close in the city, don't they?"

Frank S. Ray

NAÏVE

According to a Washington official, whose public business occasionally takes him to the mountains of Tennessee, the inhabitants of those parts evince a naïveté that is at times disconcerting to the stranger's *amour propre*.

This official had one day stopped at a mountain retreat for a few minutes to change horses.

"Purty fair lookin' hoss you 've been ridin'," observed the not uncomely young woman who had met the traveller at the door.

"Yes, pretty fair."

"Purty fair lookin' yourself," was the next observation delivered in a cool level tone.

"Thanks," said the official, slightly blushing.

"Air you married?" asked the young woman.

"No. I'm a bachelor."

"Well, I reckon you 're 'bout as well off that way, an' mebbe a little better. I'm married myself."

Charmed by this show of confidence, the official observed that perhaps his own condition would have been better had he married some good, sensible girl years before. "I'm sure," he added, "that I should have been a happier man."

The young woman smiled reflectively. "Mebbe," she concluded; "but how 'd the girl be feelin' by now?"

Edwin Tarrisse

WHAT TROUBLED PAT

An old Irish laborer walked into the luxurious studio of an artist and asked for money to obtain a meal, as he was too weak to walk.

The artist gave him a quarter, and then, seeing possibilities for a sketch in the queer old fellow, said:

"I'll give you half a dollar if you'll let me paint you."

"Sure," said the man, "it's an easy way to make money, but—but I'm wonderin' how I'd get it off."

Charles Houston Goudiss

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CHANCE FOR ANANIAS II.

By E. J. Timmons

If some bright genius only would
Invent a brand new story
For married men who stay out late,
He'd pave his way to glory.

NOT YET

A Missouri clergyman had in his pastoral flock a member who was reluctant about meeting the contribution basket. The pastor had thrown out many broad hints, but all to no avail.

One day the member fell ill and was taken to the Ensworth hospital. When the clergyman arrived the man was delirious. While the pastor was sitting beside his bed a wild yell of "Fire! Fire!" came from across the street.

The sick man drew himself up on his elbows. "Where—where am I?" he asked excitedly.

"Calm yourself, brother," soothed the pastor, with just the faintest twinkle in his eye. "You are still at the Ensworth Hospital!"

Homer Croy

IN THE SANCTUM

Editor: "What, another manuscript?"

Assistant: "Yes, 'Overheard at the Sewing Circle,'—475 words."

Editor: "Nonsense! Return it at once. There must have been many more words than that."

Karl von Kraft

COSTLY VICTORY

In a corridor of one of the University of Texas buildings there is a large replica of "The Winged Victory." A waggishly-inclined student observed the headless, armless, footless statue, and wrote underneath:

"God pity Defeat!"

John E. Rosser

A PERTINENT QUERY

Freddy suddenly stopped playing with his blocks and gazed thoughtfully across the room. After a moment's contemplation, he turned to his father.

"Papa," he began, "why have n't I ever seen any little boy policemen?"

Perrine Lambert

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PLAYING THE GAME

By Charles Houston Goudiss

I saw her flush,
I had to win;
Without a blush
I stole her hand.
I played my game
With a gambler's art—
Exchanged a diamond
For a heart!

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A few days after the return of the family, Cindy came bristling into Mrs. Warren's sitting-room.

"I wants mo' wages," she announced.

"Why, Cindy," exclaimed the surprised mistress, "you are getting better pay than any cook I know of in a family the size of ours; you have a nice, comfortable room and good treatment. Think how kind it was of Mr. Warren to give you a long vacation with your full wages."

"Dat's it," grumbled Cindy. "Mr. Warren paid me dat money fur doin' nuthin'. An' now all you folks is come back fur me to cook fur an' wait on. An' I gits more money, or I leaves."

Lillian Nicholson

NOT CHANGED AT ALL

A Westerner who claimed a lifelong acquaintance with James J. Hill had just returned from St. Paul and was describing his meeting there with the railroad magnate.

"He has n't changed a particle," said the traveller, "and he's got the same spots on his vest that he had when he was a boy."

Caroline Lockhart

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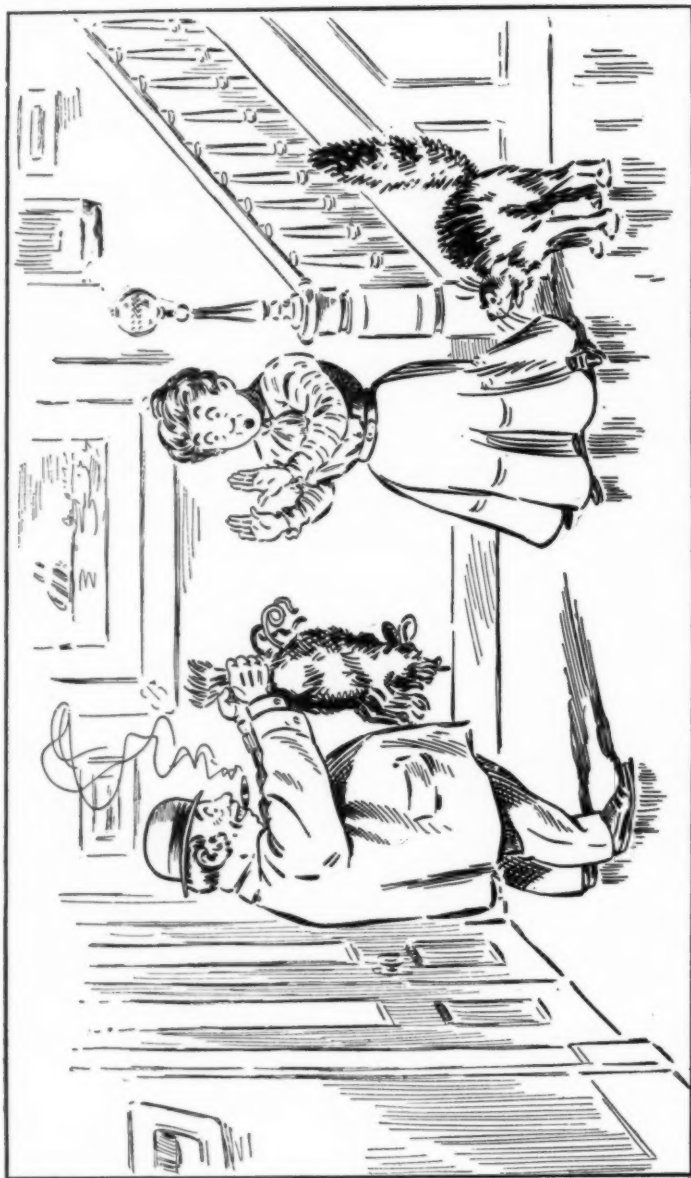
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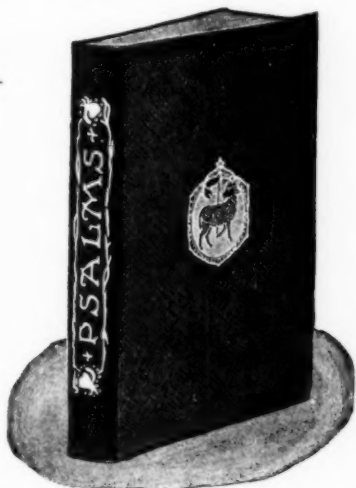
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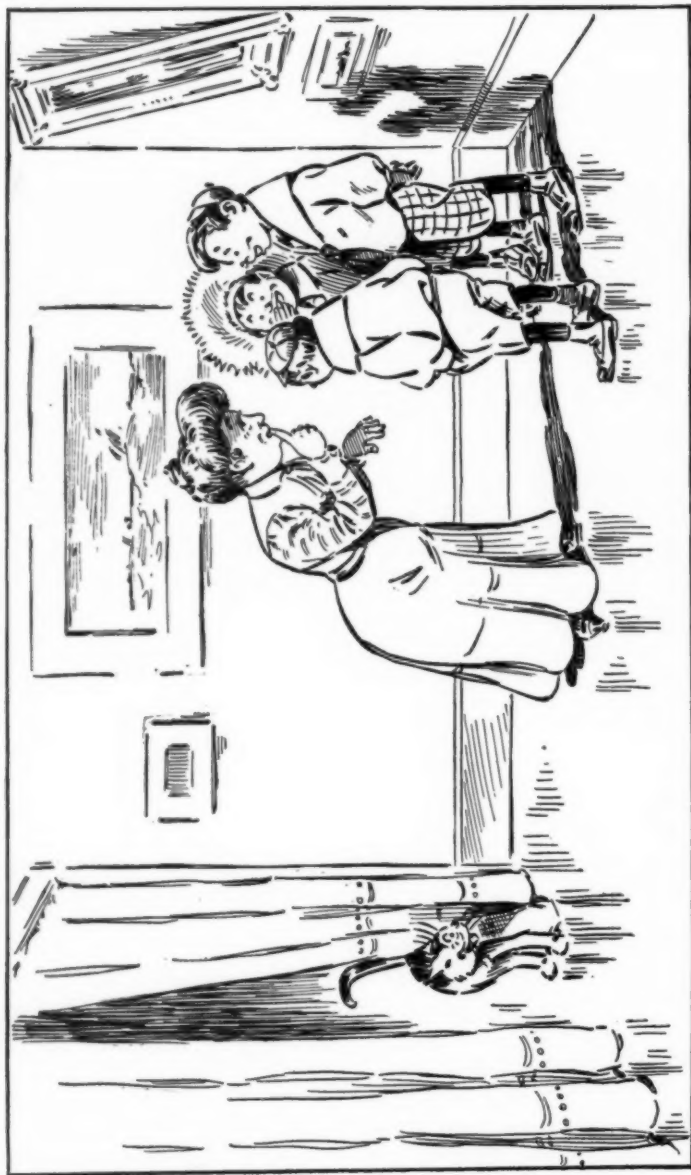
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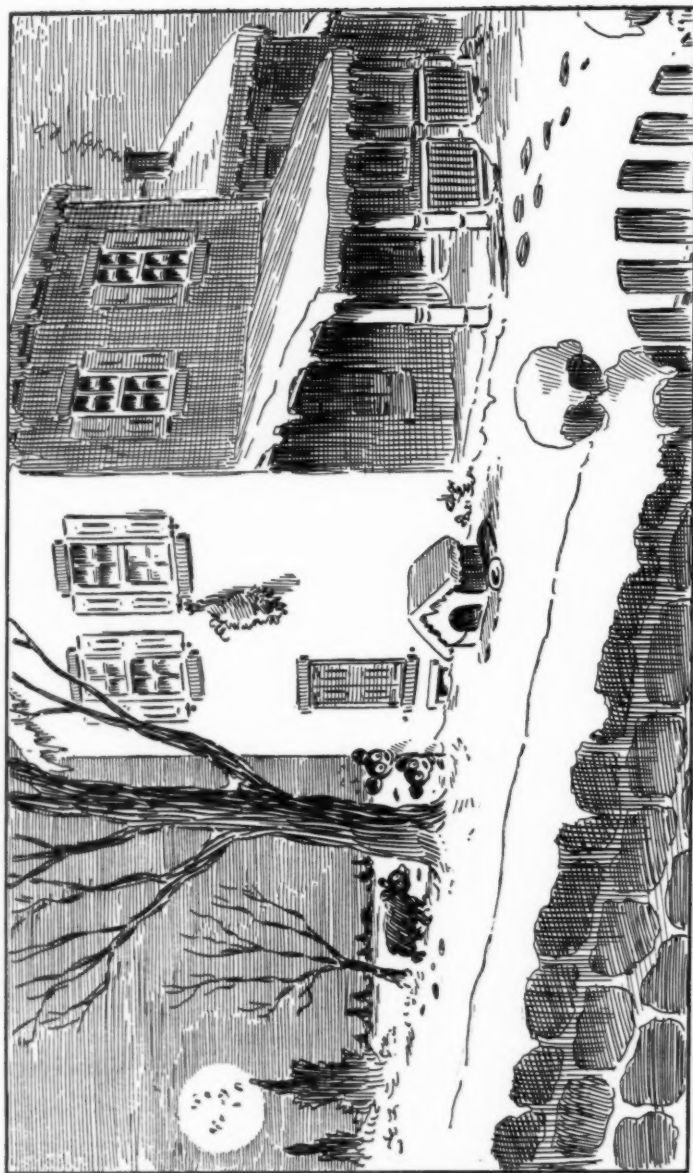
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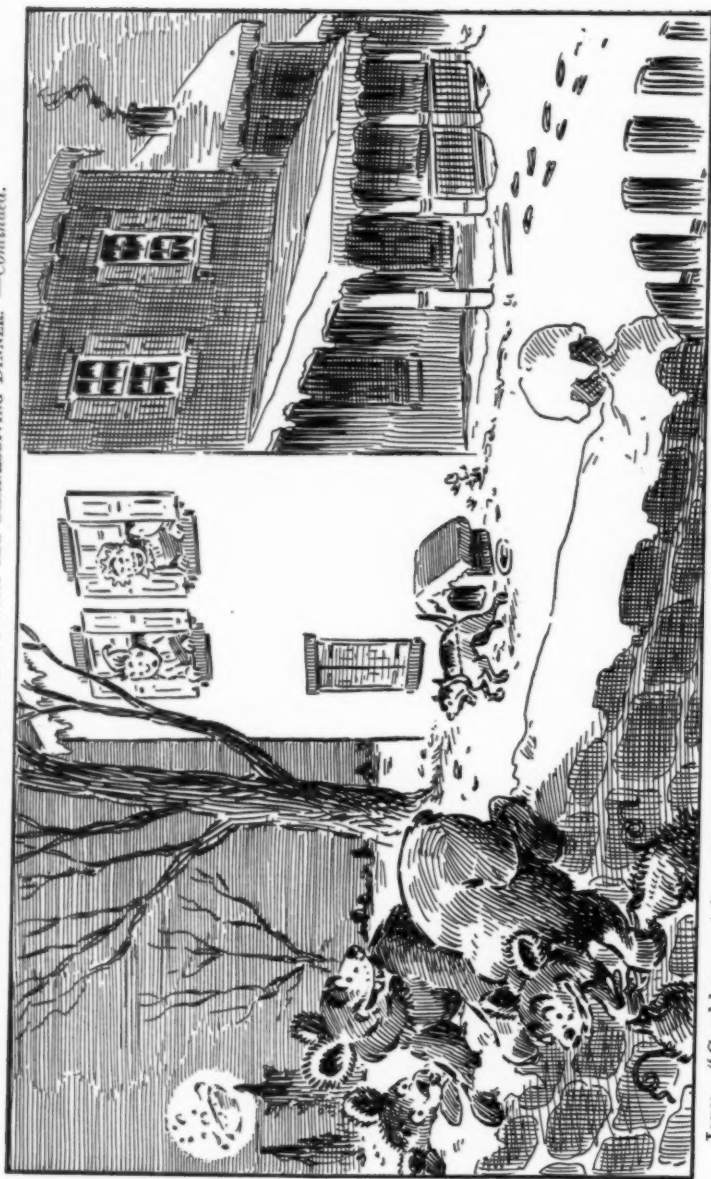
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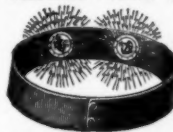


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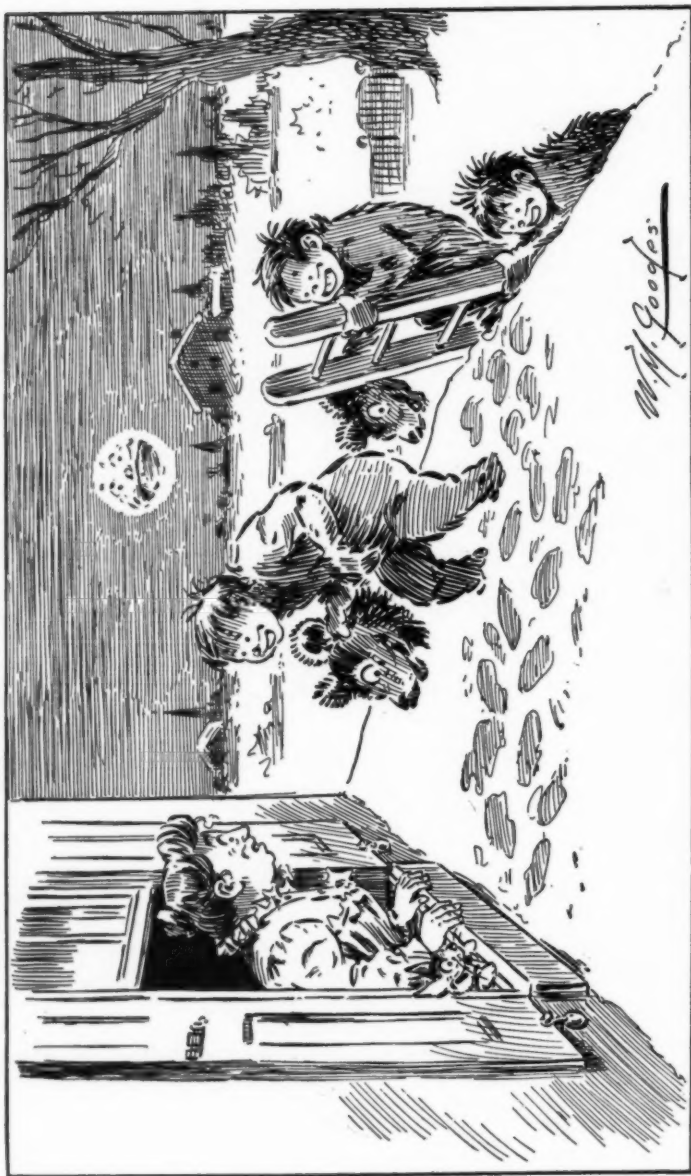
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THE BOYS.—"How'd these old holler-eye costumes work, Mom?"
 SUE.—"Fine! What did you do with the 'possums?"
 THE BOYS.—"Chucked 'em in the creek. Is the coast clear?"
 SUE.—"Yes, come in quietly; your father's asleep again."
 THE CAT.—"Well! Did you ever see anything so bear faced?"

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